




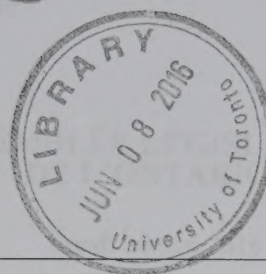
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Monday 30 May 2016

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Lundi 30 mai 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 30 May 2016

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning.

This week, the House will be paying tribute to deceased former members Michael Dietsch and Leonard Joseph Quilty. I ask that members keep their memory in mind during prayers today.

Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. David Zimmer: It is my pleasure, and the pleasure of this House, to rise in the House to introduce and welcome, on behalf of the government and all parties, those who have gathered with us here today. It is an honour to be joined by indigenous peoples from across Ontario on this important day. I would like to welcome survivors of residential schools; those people and organizations that support them; and the indigenous youth, leaders and elders who have travelled from across this province to be with us here today on this historic occasion. Thank you all for being here.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would very much like to introduce my grandchildren Olivia and Claire Wesley; their dad, Stanley Wesley; and my partner, Jane, who have joined us for this important day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As is the tradition, we have with us in the members' gallery Chris Bentley, from London West in the 38th, 39th and 40th Parliaments. Chris, welcome. Also with us we have the former Premier of the province of Ontario, Mr. Bob Rae.

As ordered on May 19, this House is now adjourned during pleasure.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

COMMISSION DE VÉRITÉ ET RÉCONCILIATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): May I please have the chamber doors opened for the entry of the elders and indigenous guests. Please rise.

Pray be seated.

Remarks in indigenous languages.

First, let me acknowledge that we are standing on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit. As Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, I am honoured to welcome you to the Legislature today, on behalf of all members of the provincial Parliament.

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 30 mai 2016

I'm honoured to host the survivors of Ontario's residential schools in the Speaker's gallery today. These men and women bore witness to a dark past in our province's history. They were torn away from their families, punished in celebrating their culture, and many suffered unthinkable acts. But they were strong. They endured, but the pain remains.

Today, it is my hope that we are now witness to a brighter future, one that allows their grandchildren and their great-grandchildren to move forward in the spirit of reconciliation.

At this time, I respectfully invite Elder Jim Dumont and his associate Elder Shelley Charles to recite a prayer to begin the proceedings.

Mr. Jim Dumont: *Prayers in indigenous languages and English.*

0910

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you, Elder Dumont.

At this time, the three party leaders will address the House. I now invite the Premier to offer her remarks.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I rise today to express a personal commitment as Premier and the commitment of the government of Ontario to being full partners with indigenous peoples on our journey towards reconciliation and healing.

I first want to thank the other parties for their co-operation in convening this special assembly and to recognize those whose presence makes today a historic and hopeful occasion: Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day and other chiefs in attendance—I know there are many here—Métis Nation of Ontario President Margaret Froh; Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres President Sheila McMahon; the president of the Ontario Native Women's Association and the Native Women's Association of Canada, Dawn Lavell-Harvard; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami President Natan Obed; Cree elder and residential school survivor Andrew Wesley; and all of the residential school survivors, indigenous leaders and youth who are here today. I also want to thank Elder Jim Dumont for his opening prayer with Elder Shelley Charles, and Métis Senator Verna Porter-Brunelle, who, along with Elder Jim Dumont, will provide closing prayers.

Je veux remercier tous les jeunes des régions autochtones d'être ici aujourd'hui afin de nous aider à franchir cette étape de notre cheminement vers la réconciliation.

Indigenous people are the original occupants of this land that we call Ontario, and over thousands of years

they developed distinct languages, cultures, economies and ways of life. This long history means that we are assembled in a sacred and traditional gathering place for many peoples of Turtle Island. I want to show respect for this by acknowledging that we're on the traditional territory of several indigenous nations and pay special recognition to the Mississaugas of the New Credit, and by recognizing the history and contributions of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples.

Our shared history begins around 400 years ago. When Europeans first arrived, the generous partnership of indigenous peoples helped them to establish profitable enterprises and settlements.

In 1763, the Royal Proclamation confirmed the original occupancy of indigenous peoples and paved the way for nation-to-nation treaties between the British crown and indigenous peoples. Treaties were negotiated and signed with the intent of delivering mutual benefits.

In Ontario, most of this happened hundreds of years ago. To some, seven generations ago can seem disconnected, but we know that our history is always shaping our present. And for some of us, treaties are part of the history that shapes our prosperity. Treaties granted us land to live on and water to drink. They're the foundation on which the short history of our country has carried forward—a history in which every generation has built a better life by building on the achievements of the past.

But that is only one side of our story. For indigenous people in Ontario, this same history created a very different reality. Despite the promise of early treaties and the respectful nation-to-nation partnerships they established, indigenous people became the target of colonial policies designed to exploit, to assimilate and to eradicate them. Based on racism, violence and deceit, these policies were devastatingly effective. They disempowered individuals and disenfranchised entire communities.

When Canada became a country 149 years ago, the legacy of violent colonialism only gathered momentum. From coast to coast to coast, the residential school system set out to "take the Indian out of the child" by removing indigenous children from their homes and systematically stripping them of their languages, cultures, laws and rights. Children were physically, emotionally and sexually abused, and many died.

These heartbreaking stories are hard to hear. For generations of indigenous people, these stories were their lives.

Les récits des survivantes et survivants nous brisent le cœur et il est difficile de les entendre, mais nous devons tous les écouter.

Canada's residential schools are closed, but they have been closed for not even one generation. Echoes of their racist colonial attitudes can still be heard, and the echoes of a society-wide, intergenerational effort of cultural genocide continue to reverberate loudly and painfully in the lives of indigenous people today.

However we choose to measure a person's opportunity and security in life, a disturbing gap exists between the indigenous and non-indigenous population. It is the gap

created by a country that abused and betrayed its indigenous people. It is a gap that swallows lives and extinguishes hope across generations.

0920

For a long time, indigenous peoples' call for justice could not be heard across this yawning gulf because Canada did not want to hear them. It is thanks to the resiliency of those who endured the abuses of the past that we are finally listening. Thank you for finding the strength and courage to come forward and tell your stories and the stories of those who were lost. In opening our eyes, you have given us this chance to move forward as partners and the opportunity to say we are sorry. So before I go on, I want to show my respect for all the survivors and all the victims by offering a formal apology for the abuses of the past.

As Premier, I apologize for the policies and practices supported by past Ontario governments and for the harm that they caused. I apologize for the province's silence in the face of deaths and abuses at residential schools. And I apologize for the fact that the residential schools are only one example of systemic, intergenerational injustices inflicted upon indigenous communities across Canada.

By adopting policies designed to eradicate your cultures and extinguish your rightful claims, previous generations set in motion a force so destructive that its impact continues to reverberate in our time. And so I want to apologize for all of this by saying I am sorry for the continued harm that generations of abuse is causing to indigenous communities, families and individuals.

A titre de première ministre, je présente nos excuses pour les abus et trahisons du passé et pour le mal qu'ils continuent à causer dans la vie des autochtones aujourd'hui.

No apology changes the past, nor can the act of apology alone change the future. In making this apology, as in making the political accord last summer, I hope to demonstrate our government's commitment to changing the future by building relationships based on trust, respect and indigenous peoples' inherent right to self-government.

This act of apology is not the end, nor is it the beginning. It is but one step on the journey to reconciliation and healing that we are committed to walking together. Last year at this time, we took one of those steps when Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission held its closing ceremonies in Ottawa. I was honoured to participate in the Walk for Reconciliation, and I want to thank Justice and now Senator Murray Sinclair, the commission, and all the survivors who participated for helping to illuminate a dark past, for honouring all of those who lost their lives and for pointing the way forward.

Ontario has already taken first steps on this journey forward. They're highlighted in The Journey Together, which is a report that we're releasing today. It outlines how Ontario is further responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's findings and calls to action. Today, Ontario commits to working in partnership with indigenous leaders and their communities to undertake 26

new initiatives that will help build trust and respect into our relationships and build opportunity and security into the lives of indigenous people.

These next steps begin, as I have today, with efforts to help everyone in our province understand the truth about our history. We will educate all Ontarians about the horrors of the residential school system, the betrayals of past governments; and our rights and responsibilities as treaty people—because in Ontario, we are all treaty people. This will include the work we are doing to ensure our education curriculum teaches every child in Ontario the truth about our past and what it means for all of us today. In addition to further actions to commemorate victims and educate Ontarians, Minister David Zimmer intends to introduce legislation today that would declare the first week of November as Treaties Recognition Week.

The Journey Together also introduces and enhances programs focused on closing opportunity gaps and ending intergenerational cycles of trauma. It guides our actions to enhance indigenous voices in the administration of justice and build a justice system that is responsive to indigenous legal principles, autonomy and cultures. And because indigenous languages and cultures are critical to the well-being of communities and to reconciliation itself, we will take a number of actions to support indigenous communities in protecting and promoting traditional knowledge, languages and oral histories. Finally, we will rename the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

The commitments Ontario is making in The Journey Together are supported with an investment of more than \$250 million over the next three years. But funding commitments alone cannot undo generations of racism and abuse. To do that, we truly need to learn from our past, which is why our programs and actions will be developed and evaluated in close partnership with our indigenous communities, openly and respectfully.

We are also working to incorporate indigenous elder and youth perspectives into decision-making across government, because reconciliation cannot be compartmentalized; it is a society- and a government-wide journey.

We will also work closely with Canada's federal government, whose commitments to reconciliation are encouraging and vital to our success.

We understand that there will be setbacks as we walk this road, as we unlearn the patterns of previous generations and replace them with new, healthy relationships. But setbacks will not weaken our resolve to walk together to a place of trust, accommodation and friendship. We do not approach reconciliation as something we need to get over with. We approach it as something that we need to get right.

Mr. Speaker, indigenous partners, my fellow Ontarians, there is no more denying our past or hiding from the truth. The duty owed to indigenous peoples is enshrined in our laws and in our values as Canadians. Building trust, respectful relationships with indigenous peoples and taking steps to end intergenerational cycles of trauma

and inequality: That is our present task. One day, it will be our history.

With the steps we're taking together to build a country that lives up to its laws, its values and its reputation as a force for good in the world, we're walking a path that connects us across generations. We are undoing the harm caused by our past, and building a society where future generations of indigenous and non-indigenous can walk together as equals, living in peace and harmony on the land that we now share. Walking this journey together, we will not fail. Chi meegwetch. Niá:wen. Marsi. Thank you.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would now like to ask the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition to bring his remarks.

Mr. Patrick Brown: As leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, on behalf of the entire Ontario PC caucus, I am honoured to receive the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on this very special day here on the floor of the Ontario Legislature.

Today, it is truly an honour to share this floor with our elected colleagues, elders and special guests. I acknowledge, as the Premier has, Isadore Day, Ontario Regional Chief of the Chiefs of Ontario; Margaret Froh, president of the Métis Nation of Ontario; Natan Obed, president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard, president of the Ontario Native Women's Association; Sheila McMahon, president of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres; Andrew Wesley, a residential school survivor; and Verna Porter-Brunelle, Métis senator.

With the official release of the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission nearly a year ago today, I can still remember the emotional response I had when reading the findings for the very first time.

The Indian residential school system is a tragic chapter in our history, and has resulted in lasting and profound impacts on our indigenous communities to this day. As you know, over 6,750 individuals and residential school survivors contributed to the commission during the seven-year process that began in 2008. This includes the combined and unique experiences of our First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. I'd like to personally thank each of these survivors for going through the difficult and emotional task of recalling their own experiences with the residential school system in Canada for the benefit of future generations.

Cela inclut l'expérience combinée et unique de nos peuples de Premières Nations, des Métis et des Inuits. Je voudrais remercier personnellement chacun et chacune de ces survivants de passer par la tâche difficile et émotionnelle de rappeler leurs propres expériences avec le système des pensionnats au Canada pour le bénéfice des générations de l'avenir.

The stories they are telling are harrowing, and I thank them for their extraordinary courage to speak.

0930

Anybody who takes the time to read the Survivors Speak component of the final report can't help but be profoundly moved. The numbers are staggering: Over 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth were part of the residential school system. Torn from their homes, they were forced to assimilate to a culture not their own. At these schools, children were subject to physical, emotional and sexual abuse. One out of every 25 of these children died there. Some were buried in unmarked graves, their parents and families not notified. It stands in stark contrast to the Ontario and the Canada that we know and celebrate today, and an education system that many take pride in.

I was proud to be in the House of Commons when the government of Canada made its historic apology. Unfortunately, for many that apology came far too late. I'm proud that in Canada, treaty rights are enshrined in the federal Constitution, and I was encouraged last year, when the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was released, that the Prime Minister apologized once again on behalf of the government of Canada and asked forgiveness of the aboriginal people of this country for failing them so profoundly. This burden is ours as a country and a province. We are sorry. Nous sommes désolés.

It is critical to remember that survivors live among us. I look forward to working towards the 94 calls to action as a parliamentarian, Ontarian and Canadian, and towards bringing truth and reconciliation between our nations. As a province, our commitment is to live and work together with our First Nations, Métis and Inuit partners to ensure the principles of trust, mutual respect and shared benefits. We are committed to supporting survivors and to continuing to strengthen relations with our aboriginal partners. As the official opposition, we will continue to work hard to ensure that the government of Ontario will continue to work towards this goal and to ensure that the necessary supports are being provided to our aboriginal communities.

We look forward to reaching across the aisle and working not only with our counterparts but also directly in partnership with indigenous communities, because all apologies, all statements, all recommendations and all ceremonies are empty and inconsequential gestures without concrete and meaningful action. Now, more than ever, it is time for us to come together as a province to work hard on behalf of all Ontarians, and that begins by recognizing the mistakes that were made in the past.

For their hard work and perseverance, I would like to thank the chair of the commission, Justice Murray Sinclair, as well as commissioners Marie Wilson and Wilton Littlechild, along with all those who previously served on the commission, for their immense contributions that led us to this day.

Thank you, again, to all our special guests who have joined us this morning. Thank you. Merci. Meegwetch.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I would now like to invite the leader of the third party to bring her remarks.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Elder Dumont and Elder Charles, Regional Chief Day, President Froh, President Obed, President McMahon, President Dr. Lavell-Harvard, Rev. Wesley and all the indigenous leaders, youth and residential school survivors who have joined us here today. Thank you for being here. Meegwetch.

I want to thank all of the elders, chiefs and guests who are here today in this House on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

There was a time when this House, this province and its institutions were not just complicit, but part of authorizing and allowing the most egregious and harmful policies towards First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

For years, governments in this province and in this country did everything they could to ignore and violate the human rights and treaty rights of indigenous peoples, to eliminate cultural practices and to eliminate aboriginal governments—replacing existing forms of aboriginal government and in the process disempowering aboriginal women, who held significant, powerful roles in many First Nations—to destroy indigenous communities and destroy families. Canada engaged in cultural genocide. As the chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Justice Murray Sinclair, writes in the commission's final report, residential schools are "one of the darkest, most troubling chapters in our nation's history." They targeted the most vulnerable people: children. They tried to break the spirit of indigenous peoples, and as Justice Sinclair says, "That any indigenous person survived the culturally crushing experience of the schools is a testament to their resilience, and to the determination of those members of their families and communities who struggled to maintain and pass on to them what remained of their diminishing languages and traditions." It is a testament to survivors like Rev. Wesley and to the strength of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples across Canada. And this recognition today in this House is long overdue.

There are two pieces to the commission's work: truth and reconciliation. Today we can learn the truth. It is written in the volumes of the commission's report. We can read and learn and begin to try to understand the real foundations on which this country and this province is built. We can learn the truth: that child neglect and abuse was at the core of the residential school system. We can learn the truth: that the government failed to provide the funding, the food, the medical treatment, the proper housing, the duty of care that we owe to every child. We can learn the truth and recognize that the legacy of the residential school system is its intergenerational impact on current and future First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

La vérité, nous pouvons l'apprendre. But only if we continue to listen. The hearings may be over, the report may have been written, today's responses may have been delivered, but the listening cannot stop, because the work

of reconciliation, the work that we must do, is only just beginning.

Of course it's true that some progress has been made, like the work that's been done to ensure that this history is part of our curriculum—that's important. But the commission's findings demonstrate the ongoing failure right here in Ontario to live up to our responsibilities. For too many people in this province, racism and systemic discrimination continue to shape their lives, the conditions in which they live and the doors that are open to them. Neglect, mistreatment and abuse have been part of the lives of so many First Nations, Inuit and Métis people and women, and a national inquiry into the murdered and missing indigenous women is long overdue.

Far too many First Nations communities continue to live without clean, safe drinking water in our province. Today there are at least 133 drinking water advisories in effect in First Nations communities across Canada, and 90 of those drinking water advisories are for First Nations communities right here in Ontario, from Attawapiskat to Curve Lake to Pikangikum and Shoal Lake 40. In this province, children are growing up without safe, clean drinking water. Parents are trying to feed their families without safe, clean drinking water. Elders are living without safe, clean drinking water. And that's unacceptable.

It is unacceptable that any family is forced to live without decent housing. And it is unacceptable that so many First Nations communities do not have access to the health care that people need. In this province today there is a state of health emergency in many First Nations communities, a health emergency born of decades of discrimination and neglect but borne out in extreme health inequities and suffering, a severe shortage of physicians and health care providers and medical equipment in First Nations communities and lives that are being cut short by diseases like rheumatic fever, diabetes and hepatitis C.

This is not what should be happening to anyone in Ontario today. So the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report is not just a series of volumes to be read. Ce rapport est un appel à l'action. In fact, it is 94 calls to action, and it is incumbent upon the government and upon all of us to act on those recommendations. They must compel us to move forward on the long journey towards meaningful reconciliation; to build a stronger relationship as equals between the government of Ontario and First Nations, Métis and Inuit governments and peoples; to remember the past and to change the future; and, most importantly, acting on the 94 calls to action means acting with much greater urgency and much greater resolve to address the ongoing impact of racism and discrimination and injustice against indigenous peoples in every form it takes. Frankly, we can no longer allow jurisdictional disputes between the government of Ontario and the government of Canada to serve as an excuse for inaction in the face of the violation of people's rights.

0940

Today, on behalf of Ontario's New Democrats, I want to take a moment to express our full support for the apology that has been issued by the government of Ontario and by the Premier this morning. It is an important and long-overdue apology, but it alone is not enough, and I know that she acknowledged that by some of the other commitments that were made along with that apology. We'll be doing our job to make sure that those commitments are adhered to.

We must all show—all of us—the political will and the determination that exists today to solve the problems that communities face: to ensure that everyone in this province has safe drinking water and safe housing; to clean up lands and rivers that are contaminated with toxins, like the Wabigoon River, that is central to the way of life for the Grassy Narrows First Nation—which we know can be done, as long as the political will is there; to ensure that women and children and men can all live free of violence; to ensure that every family has access to the health care that they need in their communities; and to ensure that children and youth have access to the opportunities that they need to start their lives and look forward to their own futures.

We owe it to every family that was torn apart. We owe it to every victim and every survivor. We owe it to future generations to do everything we can to build a future free of racism, discrimination, inequity and injustice.

That is our task moving forward. If we accomplish it over the years, we will have achieved reconciliation. It'll be a long, difficult journey, but we will take it together.

Meegwetch. Merci beaucoup. Thank you all very much for being here on this historic day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to thank all three leaders for their heartfelt comments.

At this time I would like to start our remarks in reply and begin with Isadore Day, the Ontario Regional Chief.

Chief Isadore Day: Bonjour. *Remarks in indigenous language.*

Good morning.

Remarks in indigenous language.

First of all, I want to acknowledge the Creator, creation, the prayers and the protocols.

I want to acknowledge the ceremony this morning and the elders who are with us who helped us with the invocation to get us started on this very, very important event today.

I want, as well, to acknowledge the Indian residential school survivors, the living and the deceased. They're among us today, both physically and in spirit.

I want to acknowledge Premier Kathleen Wynne and your cabinet colleagues—good morning; and the official opposition and PC Leader Patrick Brown. I'd like to acknowledge NDP Leader Andrea Horwath as well.

I'd like to acknowledge all First Nation leaders who are with us here in the gallery and who have assisted us in coming here today to respond to this very momentous occasion.

I want to acknowledge the ITK president, Natan Obed; as well, the MNO president, Margaret Froh; and the NWAC president, Dawn Lavell-Harvard.

I also want to acknowledge all those organizations that are among us here to share in this celebration. There are many, many people that should be acknowledged here today—far too many to list: my respects to all of you.

I also want to note, in appreciation, the significance of being in the Ontario Legislature. I understand that this is a very, very historic event. The opportunity to stand here in respect and acknowledgment of the apology today very much is heartfelt by us, Premier, and the members in the House here today.

It is an honour to be here today. We're gathered together to acknowledge the important effort of reconciliation by the Ontario government. Today, we journey together toward the restoration of the rights originally recognized through sacred and binding treaties with our ancestors, and reparation of lives of First Nation people damaged by Indian residential schools in Ontario.

We're here today on the traditional land of the Mississaugas of the New Credit. This is a land walked upon and shared by so many peoples from so many indigenous nations. We are the Anishinabek, Mushkegowuk, Onkwehonwe, and the Lenape—the first peoples of Turtle Island. This is our land, Ontario, land of blue waters.

We stand here today in the presence of the spirits of our ancestors; in the presence of the spirits of those leaders who signed the Treaty of Niagara in 1764, the Lake Superior and the Lake Huron treaties, the Williams Treaties and the numbered treaties; and in the presence of chiefs and grand chiefs who are descendants of those who represent this unbroken line connecting our people to this present-day relationship with the originating colonists—the Ontario citizen today and the settler kin of the Métis people.

We also stand in the presence of the troubled spirits of our children, our youth, our sisters, mothers and grandmothers. Far too many have taken their lives or have had their lives stolen. Far too many continue to suffer under poverty and despair, not of their choosing, not of their wish or desire, but as a sustained result of colonization deception of the peace and friendship in the treaties—unfortunately here in the province of Ontario. We speak about the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in this province.

As we stand in the presence of our residential school survivors, we are reminded of a system meant to kill the Indian in the child. Not only have they suffered unspeakable abuse, but their children and grandchildren have also suffered. How terribly sad that this horrible legacy continues to impact our present generations, as is so evident in the current suicide crisis of our children and youth. The vast majority of us as First Nation people across this land can speak of the direct impacts of this dark legacy. Yes, many of us have lived in the direct darkness and shadows of the evil that was so evident in so many of those schools.

The Indian Act of 1876 formalized the chains of oppression that we, as First Nation people, continue to struggle to break free of to this day. Combined colonialism—the Indian Act along with the full implementation of the residential school system—would become the malevolent scheme towards the destruction of our humanity. This colonial force created such a high level of dysfunction and despair for so many generational decades that its effects continue to impact the well-being of our families to this day through intergenerational trauma, a communal post-trauma experienced in all First Nations in this province.

We also continue to be subject to policy and legislation that shapes and controls our lives to this day and the progenies of the Indian Act system: unjustified and unjust jurisdiction against our people and our lands. The deepness of poverty that continues to kill our people is not right. This has never been right in a land as rich as Ontario. Our ancestors did not envision these present horrors when they agreed to share the wealth of this land. This goes against, again, the original peace and friendship treaties of this land.

Our peoples were never included in the discussions when vast tracts of land here in Ontario were illegally sold to immigrants from Europe in order to pay off debts of the War of 1812. If our peoples had not been allies in that war, Ontario and Canada may have never existed.

Our peoples were never part of the discussions when Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia formed Confederation in 1867. Yet, today, we are subject to a division of powers and not formally welcomed by the federal family on this land—oddly like uninvited guests on our own land.

Before 1867, the marginalization of indigenous people had already begun through discriminatory and inequitable measures. We were already being forced into small reserves. We had begun to lose our rights, traditions, cultures, languages and sustenance to life. We began to lose our children to residential schools. We had become prisoners in our own lands: Canada's apartheid—it is real. It is the true subject of reconciliation in this province today.

0950

Premier and members of the Ontario Legislature, this is your time to cast a light on a dark and painful history. Let the healing begin.

The spirit of change is upon us. The highest courts of this land tell us the Constitution protects indigenous ways of life, our culture and the connection to our lands. The Constitution can now affirm and begin to formally recognize, through reconciliation, inherent and treaty rights—never relinquished as pre-contact and original indigenous peoples of this land.

The political accord being implemented in Ontario, the commitments of both the federal and provincial governments that follow the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, and the full adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples—these are all powerful signals of a new

relationship based on equality, restitution and recognizing our sovereignty as nations.

Today, we will walk together on the path towards building happy, healthy First Nation families and communities. We will end the scourge of suicide. We will end the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. We will return our children to their families. We will work together to build economies in the spirit and intent of the treaties. We will work together to combat climate change. We will work together to return Ontario to the beauty and bounty that first attracted settlers to our lands. We will strengthen indigenous peoples' connection to our mother—Mother Earth.

In conclusion, we must turn all of our efforts and seek the full involvement and inclusion of our Indian residential school survivors in all aspects of moving forward, for it is they who have carried the full burden and experienced the darkness of this history. They must never again feel left out, alone or abandoned. This process, Premier, these investments, they belong to these residential school survivors. As the Regional Chief of Ontario, I will be making every effort possible to ensure that the residential school survivors are a part of each and every aspect of this investment and this policy coming from this House moving forward.

Today, we move closer to fulfilling the original intent of the treaties envisioned by our ancestors. Premier and all those present in this legislative House, today we reclaim our rightful place in Ontario. May the Creator bless all of you, and may our ancestors feel the warmth of reconciliation in this new era of healing. Meegwetch.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We will now hear from the president of the Métis Nation of Ontario, Margaret Froh.

Ms. Margaret Froh: Good morning. Bonjour.

Remarks in indigenous language.

My name is Margaret Froh. I am the president of the Métis Nation of Ontario, and I'm very honoured to be here this morning to address the Legislature, and be here with residential school survivors, as well as First Nations and Inuit leaders.

I want to begin by acknowledging the territory that we're on, and I want to thank the elders for the prayers—how we started our day—but how we started this morning in the House as well.

I also want to acknowledge Premier Wynne and your cabinet. I want to acknowledge the leader of the official opposition, Patrick Brown, as well as the leader of the NDP, Andrea Horwath, and all of you—all of you who sit in this Legislature for this historic event that's happening today.

I want to acknowledge the First Nation and Inuit elders, community leaders, citizens and guests who are present in the House this morning, and I want to acknowledge our Métis citizens and members of our provisional council of the Métis Nation of Ontario, our Métis provincial government, who are here with us today to witness this historic event.

Premier Wynne's announcement today and the apology that has been shared is, I believe, another significant

milestone in the efforts that Ontario is making in committing to establish strong and collaborative relationships and partnerships with indigenous peoples in Ontario.

Last year, the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission came to a close and, with it, the final report and the 94 calls to action were issued—and I stress the term “action” in that sense—to address the legacy of the Indian residential school system in Canada. I believe Ontario's announcement today acknowledges that hugely negative impact that the residential school system has had in our communities and continues to have in our communities. I believe it charts a course of action, a way forward for us to begin to address that legacy.

Métis, First Nations and Inuit children, families and communities suffered under Canada's residential school system and its assimilationist policies. However, the Métis experience of residential schooling remains largely untold. For many Métis children, residential schools and day schools that were operated by the churches and the religious orders and supported by provincial and federal governments were the only option for receiving an education. For some, they were made to go to school. For others, they were sent by their families in the hope of an education and a brighter future for their families and for their communities. And as with First Nations and Inuit, Métis families and communities continue to be deeply affected by the legacy of residential schools.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission dedicated an entire volume of its report specifically to the experience of Métis people within the residential school system. Quoting from that report: “The Métis experience of residential schooling has been overlooked for too long.... There is no denying that the harm done to the children, their parents, and the Métis community was substantial. It is an ongoing shame that this damage has not been addressed and rectified.”

The vast majority of the 94 calls to action issued by the TRC in their final report are inclusive of all indigenous people, and the actions announced here today must do the same. They must include Métis, First Nations and Inuit. If we are to effect any real change and advance reconciliation in our province, Métis must be at the table along with our indigenous family.

I want to acknowledge and give thanks to TRC Chair Justice—now Senator—Murray Sinclair, and Commissioners Chief Wilton Littlechild and Dr. Marie Wilson for the care, attention and deep commitment they showed in the work that they did. They have provided all Canadians with a true gift in the statements they have gathered on behalf of survivors and in that vision that they have provided for a way forward, for a way forward in healing and reconciliation.

I want to acknowledge and give thanks to all the survivors and their families, including those who are here today, for having the courage to stand and tell their stories. They've shared so much in that truth-telling process.

What is abundantly clear from Canada's truth and reconciliation process is that there is much work that

needs to be done to advance healing and reconciliation in Canada, both between indigenous and non-indigenous people but also between and among our own indigenous nations as well.

The TRC final report and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples together provide a blueprint for moving forward in that work of reconciliation in Canada. Six months ago, I was here, along with the leadership of the Métis Nation of Ontario, and all three parties in this House stood in support of the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act. That recognized the unique structure of our Métis Nation government, and that, I believe, was an act of reconciliation.

We stand here again today, this time again with all-party support, for this statement on reconciliation and supporting and acknowledging that apology that you've offered, Premier Wynne. On behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario, I want to acknowledge that the apology that's been offered by the province of Ontario is very much welcomed.

I also want to acknowledge the government for taking this important step today to specifically address those 94 calls to action in the TRC's final report and to do so through a collaborative process in close partnership with Métis First Nations and Inuit peoples in Ontario.

The Métis Nation of Ontario is very proud of the respectful and productive relationship that we have with the government of Ontario, as demonstrated through our MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement. We're going to build on that solid foundation to work with Ontario towards and advancing reconciliation.

As a Canadian, I recognize that I have a role to play in the process of healing and reconciliation. Indeed, every single one of us, as Canadians, has an important role to play in that work. The Métis Nation of Ontario is committed to working with Ontario, with all of the parties, with other indigenous peoples and with all Ontarians to advance that end.

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Together, I believe we must chart a new course forward for our province and for our country, one that's based on respect, understanding and trust. Today we remember the past, but it also brings great hope for the future, and with that, with this work to advance reconciliation, we will build a much brighter future for all of us in Ontario. Merci. Meegwetch.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Now we'll hear from the president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Mr. Natan Obed.

Mr. Natan Obed: *Remarks in indigenous language.*

Good morning. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak with you today. Premier Wynne, leaders of the opposition, my fellow leaders and elders, all of you here today in the gallery as well: Thank you so much for being here. This is indeed an historic day for Canada.

It's very unlikely that a representative of Inuit would be speaking with you here today. This is the land of our indigenous brothers and sisters, First Nations and Métis. But it is also unlikely when we think about the history

that Inuit have had in our colonial relationship with Canada. Inuit have been visiting and have been subjected to many policies that have changed our life courses, and many of the things that have happened to us have happened in Ontario.

So today, with our population of 60,000 across Inuit Nunangat, our Arctic homeland, we have 25% of that population that live outside of our settlement regions, and many thousands of Inuit live in Ontario. The histories behind those shifts in populations sometimes have to do with many things that all Canadians would consider to be normal, such as going away for school or job opportunities. But there are too many people that have left our homeland out of necessity or out of systemic racism and policies that have not provided people with the ability to live in their homeland, and are here either in Ontario out of unfortunate circumstances or because of our legacies, such as the residential school system.

It's profound to think of the effect that the residential school system has had on indigenous peoples in Canada. For Inuit, our experience happened in a time of great change, after World War II. Many Inuit didn't live in communities until after World War II, when the Canadian government forced a number of different policies on us in a very short period of time.

The residential school experience was one of many that took our children and those whom we loved dearest away from us. So I want to recognize all of those who still struggle with what happened during that time—not just the residential school survivors but their families and all who loved them. Their lives are forever profoundly changed, and what is happening here today is going to chart a new course.

For all the things that happened in the last 50 or 60 years to indigenous people and to Inuit in Canada, it had a start in the sense of profound ownership of one population over another, and we hope that reconciliation now will bring the true meaning of the term “self-determination” back to indigenous peoples.

For Inuit, self-determination is not limited to our boundaries. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples clearly states that indigenous peoples' rights are wherever they reside, rather than specific to our homelands. So as this reconciliation process happens and decisions are made about how monies flow and what populations are going to receive services or supports, the true test will be whether or not Inuit will be a part of those discussions as partners, as indigenous people, or the alternative, which is so often linked to further ways to keep our populations in poverty and at the lower margins of society.

Reconciliation demands action, and you've shown action here today. But also from action comes a test—a test of whether or not, when things get difficult, when decisions that should be made based on the tenet of self-determination are at odds with the needs of other interests—whether they be economic or whether they be political or in the governance of the way in which decisions happen in the bureaucracy, or wherever decisions happen that affect the rights of indigenous people.

The true test is, what are we going to do? What are the citizens of Ontario, the members of the Legislature, the cabinet, what is the Premier going to do when tough decisions need to be made that are not necessarily in the best interest of one political party, communities or individuals? I think that ultimately, the respect that we have for one another needs to go beyond just sympathy, to a true sense of understanding the relationship that indigenous people have with this province and with every single citizen.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak with you today. Naqurmiik.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I would now like to call upon Sheila McMahon, the president of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres.

Ms. Sheila McMahon: Boozhoo.

Remarks in indigenous language.

My home community is Couchiching First Nation. I've lived in Fort Frances, Ontario, for many years, off-reserve.

My English name is Sheila McMahon. I'd like to thank you—the elders, Mr. Speaker, Premier Wynne, ministers, Leader of the Opposition Mr. Brown, Ms. Horwath, members, chiefs, indigenous leaders, our residential school survivors, and ladies and gentlemen. As the president of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, I bring greetings from our members from across Ontario. We're very honoured to be here today, and we thank you for inviting us to join you in this historic ceremony of reconciliation.

The friendship centres have travelled a long road to be strong, vibrant cultural hubs for our communities to gather and celebrate what it is to be indigenous. We did not always travel this road with many friends outside of our own communities. It has taken society a long time to shine light in the dark corners of our collective histories. Only now are you beginning to come to terms with what this history means for you, and about who you are. That is why we are here.

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The reconciliation work ahead of us should be marked and acknowledged in a way that is recognized by all of us. It is in itself a step in the direction of transforming the way we see each other.

This is also the role of the friendship centres: to create space that celebrates indigenous people and act as that bridge between indigenous people and non-indigenous people and communities. In that way, friendship centres are simultaneously an embodiment of indigenous identity and reconciliation. Since the very first investments in friendship centres in the 1970s, a different set of relationships was created: a different way of us seeing ourselves because of what we were able to accomplish, and a different way for you to see us because of what we were achieving.

We do not take this for granted. We have worked for decades to come to this place, where we can finally have an honest conversation about our shared history and not

to be strangers in our own land. We acknowledge this monumental step towards reconciliation, which will change the future for generations to come. It's a good day today. I believe it started when we went to our sunrise ceremony, and I'd like to say meegwetch.

When we hold our feathers, we speak of honesty and truth, and we speak from the heart. And when I say thank you, meegwetch for listening, I'm speaking from my heart.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would now call upon Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard, the president of the Ontario Native Women's Association.

Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard: Aanii. Boozhoo. Bonjour. Good morning. Please let me start by acknowledging the indigenous peoples of this territory.

Remarks in indigenous language.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, honoured elders, Madam Premier, leaders Patrick Brown and Andrea Horwath, and all of the very, very important people who are here today. This is truly a historic moment.

We are honoured to participate in this historic event towards reconciliation with indigenous peoples. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report represents an opportunity for indigenous families, for indigenous women to be restored to our traditional leadership roles and to restore balance to our communities and our nations. When we include our women in the decisions that affect our lives, we will actualize community change, and we will have the restoration of balance and well-being in our communities.

Our journey together in this country began with indigenous women being systematically targeted and subjugated by colonial practices. These practices have broken our families, broken our relationships, but our strength and resiliency is key to community healing for our families. It's our community and our responsibility. This is our traditional way of being. This is our role as women, as mothers, as leaders.

Reconciliation means more than just the restoration of our relationship. Our women, our people have un-addressed grief and intergenerational trauma, as the residential schools severed the most important bond: the bond between indigenous children and their mothers and their families. This system exposed our children to a cycle of violence that continues today. But we know that violence is a learned behaviour, and therefore we also know that we can unlearn this behaviour. We can make a change through holistic healing frameworks that acknowledge our shared history and our interconnectedness, that acknowledges the good and the bad and learning from our past. If we are going to stop the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women, the crisis of suicide in our youth, we must do better.

Reconciliation with indigenous women must create the space for re-empowerment, and, through this capacity-building of our communities, we will set in motion the prospect for family healing. We know the current child welfare models must involve the voice of women and families. It is our role as mothers and community leaders,

in order to renew the cultural identity and family well-being. There's a reason it's called our "mother tongue." Our mothers are the first teachers; the teachers of our language, the teachers of our culture, the transmitters of our identity. It is for these reasons, it is for those future generations to have those teachings, that we continue on this path together when times become difficult and indeed it would be easier to walk away, that we remember that we have a very difficult job to do and we must stay the course.

For many of our women, these maternal and cultural responsibilities continue to be unfulfilled because our children continue to be taken, continue to be placed in the care of the government. Many of our women are denied the right to parent their own children. The community suffers, the families suffer, but, most importantly, the children are still suffering.

We are here today, collectively, to honour these children and the families. These are our families. We're here to honour the victims and the survivors of the residential schools. It was because of the courage of those brave souls, who spoke out, who shared their unimaginable pain and suffering—the horrors of abuse, not only in their bodies, but in their hearts and minds. We shall never forget.

Courage is not the absence of fear, but the strength to carry forward in the face of fear. They had that kind of courage to carry on. It is because they had such courage, the courage to speak the truth, that those who heard their stories are forever changed. In their honour, we shall remember. Never again—never again will anyone be able to say that it was a well-intentioned effort gone awry. Never again will they be able to say, "It wasn't that bad; lots of children go to boarding school." Never again will we be able to deny the tragic reality of our joint history and the ugly truth upon which this country was founded. We shall remember because we owe it to those children who never returned home, those children who died within those walls.

We have heard their truth, and now we must share their courage. There can be no reconciliation when there's no conciliation in the first place. We cannot simply repair a tear in the fabric. We must have that kind of courage to begin a long-overdue process of weaving a new fabric for Canada and for Ontario, a new fabric that incorporates the fibres of all of our beings. One of our most important teachings as Anishnawbe people is from the sweetgrass: that one blade is very easily broken; when we bundle them together, it is strong; and, when we take all of our bundles together and we braid them, you cannot break this. Whether this is our people in each bundle or whether this is the different political parties, some things are too important to allow political stripes to get in the way. It's time that we set that aside and bond together because together we are stronger, and together we can do better.

I acknowledge the courage it took to apologize and the commitment of this government, the commitment of everyone in this room, to move forward in a good way.

This is indeed a historic day. Now, together, we will begin the next chapter of our story. We can and we must do better. This time, let it be better for us all. Chi meegwetch.

Applause.

1020

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We will now hear a representative for all survivors of the residential school system, Mr. Andrew Wesley.

Rev. Andrew Wesley: *Remarks in indigenous language.*

I come to you this morning with humility. I come to talk to you about the residential schools.

The old ones tell us that when we come into this world, we're given one canoe and one paddle. As we travelled the rivers of life, for many of us, the survivors, we got stuck in the rapids, and we stayed there for many, many, many, many, many years, before we started talking about the abuse.

Remarks in indigenous language.

Many of us that were in school, we experienced many abuses that we already heard the Premier reading from the report. Those experiences are true. We carry it today, as we go in this life.

One time, I heard Martin Luther King Jr. speaking about, "I have a dream." In that dream, he talked about the mountain. Just a while ago, I heard Justice Sinclair talking about the mountain. Us survivors, we've been to the top of the mountain. On top of the mountain, we were given new fire to talk about our hurts, our pain, our struggle. We were given to be bold. We were instructed to be strong. We were instructed not to be ashamed. We were instructed not to be afraid to talk about dehumanization. We were not afraid to talk about the traumatization of our spirits.

We came down from that mountain, and we're telling you the truth of what happened. We're telling you the truth because we're tired of being hurt. We want to travel with the rest of you in a good way. From that mountain, we gained the strength we needed.

Many of us went to the various TRC hearings to be able to tell our story, not to be afraid to cry the way we cried when we were abused like little kids, not to be afraid to cry as an adult and as a grandfather.

To me, reconciliation didn't mean anything for a long time. Why should I reconcile? I didn't do anything wrong. Why? I was taken away. I was beaten up. But I didn't do anything wrong. Why should I reconcile to the government and to the church?

But because of my wife and her strength and her encouragement, I started to understand what reconciliation is all about. And as I got old, I started to understand more, that I have to talk about the abuse and be able to release the pain that I was carrying. Now I understand what reconciliation is all about. I understand.

You know, when a hunter is about to go out and get food for his family, the night before he goes out, he speaks to the game that he's going to bring home to ask

for forgiveness. From that mountain, we were given the power to honour the people that abused us, because we want to live a good life.

Remarks in indigenous language.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you, Andrew.

I would now call upon Elder Verna Porter-Brunelle, Métis senator, and Elder Jim Dumont for the closing.

Ms. Verna Porter-Brunelle: Good morning. Bonjour. Tansi. I am honoured and very humbled to have been asked to come here today. I would like to recognize Premier Wynne, I would like to recognize all the elders who have come here today, and the members of the House.

1030

Creator, we pray and thank you for each and every day you have blessed us here on Earth with your many gifts of water, trees, spring flowers and the air we breathe. Many of our brothers and sisters are not so fortunate, but today our leaders have shown compassion, and with your guidance, Creator, we will be on the path of healing and helping. Wrap your loving arms around the families that grieve for their children. Send your spirit to those who feel they have no meaning here on Earth. A good lesson is that we not take life for granted.

Let us show respect and understanding to the struggles of our indigenous people. We are indigenous people: First Nations, Métis and Inuit. As Métis citizens, we fought in wars and our ancestors and family members attended residential schools, but we have been forgotten in many ways. But we are strong, and we're a proud Métis people. We have fallen, we have gotten back up, and we are now united and stronger.

We may be miles apart from some of the indigenous people but our hearts are connected. Our heartstrings ache when we hear of another suicide. Today, with renewed commitment from our leaders, help from our Creator and prayers from all of us here today, there will be a brighter future coming. We honour our ancestors who have gone to the spirit world and we are very proud today. The sun will shine again on our people.

Aujourd'hui, nous sommes très encouragés par les bonnes nouvelles. On demande au Créateur de nous donner l'espoir et l'encouragement nécessaires pour guérir des relations du passé.

Several years ago, I was honoured to be the master of ceremonies for the Honourable James Bartleman, past Lieutenant Governor. He had written a book, *As Long as the Rivers Flow*. When I went to get my book signed, I told him I didn't quite like his book. I said, "I'm having a hard time getting through it. I'll read two pages and I have to put it down." That's how graphic everything was, and it was a true story. His answer to me was, "Keep reading—it gets better." So I'm leaving you with this today: Keep reading; keep fighting for our rights. It does get better. Meegwetch. Thank you.

Mr. Jim Dumont: *Remarks in indigenous language.*

When we opened the day, we sent out a message to the spirit in all those sacred places where the spirit dwells. And we ask the spirit to look this way toward us and to help us in what we're doing. We ask that of our mother the Earth also, and of our relatives in this creation. And when we do this in this way, we know that the spirit answers us. We know that our mother won't let us down, and we know that our relatives care about us and they will answer what we ask as well.

And so, when we are finished doing what we have come here to do, then we are obliged to talk to the spirit again, to talk to our mother the Earth and our relatives that we've asked this of, because in the way that they think, the way that the spirit thinks—what they are being called on to do—they answer us because of how much they do care about us. They will remain true to that obligation that they have made. So we have to let them know that we are finished what we have come here to do.

In our thanksgiving, we thank them for the way that they have helped us. It must have been that they responded to us and did offer this help, because in a place where, a lot of times, people aren't kind to one another—because there's something in this system, that people think that to govern a country, you are obliged to be at odds with one another. But we have heard in this House today, in recognition of the true and vital importance of attending to the issues of the original people of this land, that everyone will work together.

Maybe it's just me who thinks that, but it must be a hard thing to do, to actually say that in this place. But both sides of the House have said that, and that means something to us.

We can say the spirit must have heard us, so the spirit nudged us from time to time, to remind us of our responsibility and the way that we should act and the way that we should be, in trying to work together, and that it's important that we be honest and true to one another. The spirit must have reminded us of that.

In these words, in all of the words that were spoken, we have reminded one another about our relationship that we have, and that what all of the treaties are about isn't, first of all, about surrender and ownership and possessions and compensation. Treaties are about relationship, and we have to find a way that we can be truly related to one another in a good way in this country, in this land, in this province. That's what we committed ourselves to do when we signed those treaties. That's the way we entered those treaties.

In the same way that we opened this session today, from the time we stood in the presence of the rising sun to here in this lodge, in this House, we made a commitment to the spirit, and in doing that, we said, "Even here in this place, the spirit is working."

1040

That's the way we enter all agreements. We make that agreement in the presence of the spirit and we have to be true to that. We have to own up to that responsibility and we have to remind one another of the importance of that. We have to figure out how we can do that in a good way,

not only to make up for the wrongs of the past but to find a good way into the future. So the spirit must have heard us and must have responded.

Even those things that we fail to mention are a reminder to us that all those that we ask must be wondering why we never talked about them. We didn't say anything about the animals. We didn't say anything about the vegetation, the grass and flowers. We didn't say anything about the rocks, the minerals. We didn't say anything about the trees when we talked here together.

The absence of that really stands out to the spirit. So it must be telling us that we need to consider those things, because we know that if anything ever happens—that there are no longer any medicines flowing, and that something happens so that the food that grows up from the earth is not edible any more—kindness will disappear from the earth. We will not know how to care about one another. If anything happens that we cut down all the trees, truth and honesty will be gone amongst us. If anything ever happens to the animals, we will lose our ability to share with one another. If anything ever happens to the rocks and the minerals, as it is happening in this country, the very strength that we need to live our life and to live up to the things that we believe in, that strength will be gone.

We need to make that connection in everything that we do. At the end of whatever we're speaking about, whatever we're gathered together about, we always say "all my relatives." When we say that, what we're saying to all of our relations in this creation as well as our human relations: "We are all related to one another and I will include you in my words. I will include you in my thoughts. I will include you in the decisions that I make."

We end in that way, asking the spirit to continue to bless us with life and letting all of our relations know that we have considered them and we have been noticed by them.

Remarks in indigenous language.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have been extremely honoured and deeply humbled to preside over this historic ceremony this morning.

Remarks in indigenous language.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Our escort, please.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before we finish with the order, I would also like to introduce Mr. James Bartleman, the former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

With the House's indulgence, I would like to take a five-minute recess to prepare the House for question period. If I do not receive any feedback, I'm going to assume that we are going to take a five-minute recess to allow people to leave and to prepare the House.

This House stands recessed for five minutes.

The House recessed from 1047 to 1053.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. I didn't think this government could get more callous, but the next thing you know, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville called the police on Melanie Palaypayon, the mother of a six-year-old boy with autism. Melanie just wanted to be heard, but instead her own MPP sent the police to her door.

It's one thing to refuse and cancel meetings. It's another thing to block the parents of a child with autism on Twitter. But what I can't believe is that they'd have the nerve to call the police on a constituent. And regardless of that apology, that action is completely unacceptable. Melanie simply wanted a few answers. Specifically, she wanted to ask, "Who are you to decide my child's future? Who are you to decide he is not worthy of a better life?"

So my question to the Premier is, who is this Premier to decide that this six-year-old, Xavier, is not worthy of a better life?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I'm tempted to say, "And now for something completely different."

Let me begin by reminding the member that the member has apologized to Ms. Palaypayon. I know he's profoundly sorry for the circumstances that resulted in the anxiety caused to her and her family.

We know how important it is to listen to constituents on all matters. Our caucus members have been meeting with families from across Ontario to explain how the new autism program will work, to make sure that they are getting the information that they need. It is of concern to us if families are not getting the information they need in terms of transition, because at the root of the new autism program is the intent and the directive to make sure that every child in this province who has autism gets the service and the intensity of service that they need.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: This is not an issue to make jokes about. This is a heartbreaking, real-life story of the callousness of this Liberal government.

I met with Melanie and her six-year-old son, Xavier. She is an amazing mother with an equally amazing son. I'm happy that the member finally, belatedly apologized, but it was only after this government got embarrassed on the front pages of the newspapers. It wasn't right, it got exposed and that's why the apology finally happened.

It's not just kicking a child with autism off from the waiting list that we're seeing this government undertake; it's cutting care at the province's children's hospitals. Last year, the Liberals cut 42 jobs—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. The member from Beaches–East York—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to do my job, please.

The member from Beaches–East York will withdraw.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Withdraw, Speaker.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's getting to be a habit.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not going to help.

Please finish.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, this is a pattern. An example is the 42 jobs at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. SickKids in Toronto has been forced to operate at over 100% capacity.

How much longer will the Liberals turn their backs on the most vulnerable children in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We are increasing funding to health care each and every year. We are putting \$333 million into a new autism program in order to provide a better program. That's \$333 million more than is already in the system.

The point of doing that is to make sure that we provide programming for kids who are right now sitting on a waiting list and not getting any service. That status quo is unconscionable. We have to make sure that we provide the service that those kids need.

Mr. Speaker, the investments that we have made in health care, the investments that we're making in autism are about providing the services that children, seniors and families across this province need. That's the intention of the investments that we're making and we're seeing results, which I'll speak to in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: When the Premier says, "investments in health care," her investments mean cutting 42 staff at CHEO. Her investments mean kicking 2,200 kids off the list for desperately needed IBI. Her investments mean you have SickKids at overcapacity. Her investments are the diminishment of health care in Ontario.

The Premier says that their investment in autism is the right course, is evidence-based, but let me point out what the Ottawa Citizen wrote. In January 2014, a report from the Autism Spectrum Disorder Clinical Expert Committee stated that the therapy should not be cut for children over the age of five. There is no evidence to back up your approach. There is no evidence to back up your cuts. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, where exactly is the evidence found to defend taking IBI from kids over five?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Speaker, therapy is not being cut to children over five. The point is that there are

children sitting on waiting lists who are not getting any service at all—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please, Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The fact is that this program is about getting more service to more kids—16,000 more kids getting service, kids who are getting service now, making sure that they go through a transition.

1100

I've met with the organizations of parents who are concerned about this. I've listened to them. The minister and I have talked about the reality that perhaps we need to look at direct funding as part of the model. That's something that parents have brought forward to us.

Miss Monique Taylor: Perhaps.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite heckles, "Perhaps." The fact is, \$8,000 of transition is direct funding. What we're looking at is, is there a better way to help those families make the transition?

We're working hard on this side of the House to make sure that kids get service. The opposition can choose to negate that. The reality is, more kids need—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Start the clock.

New question.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. It's clear that this government is cutting health care across the board. They slashed \$815 million from physicians for patient care, not to mention the 1,400 nurses cut in Ontario in the last year. Clinics are closing all across the province.

But what most people don't see day to day is the ridiculous and unacceptable overcrowding in Ontario's hospitals. When I first saw it in Brampton, I couldn't believe that hospital beds were littered in the hallway. That can't happen in Ontario.

What fantasy world is this government living in when they say they are investing in health care? Instead of getting beds out of the hallway, this government has the nerve to run self-congratulatory radio ads about what a great job they're doing out there.

Mr. Speaker, my question is, someone has to take responsibility. Will the Premier do the right thing and make sure her Minister of Health takes responsibility for the chaos—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to comment in the supplementaries.

Mr. Speaker, let me just talk about what's happening as a result of the investments that we are making, and have made, in health care, including the billion dollars more that was in this budget that the opposition voted against.

Ninety-four per cent of Ontarians have access to family health care providers. The independent Wait Time Alliance has made a statement that we've gone from the worst to first for reducing wait times. That's in hip and knee replacements, cataract surgery, cardiac care, radiation oncology, MRIs, CT scans and ultrasounds.

The Fraser Institute—let me just pause there—the Fraser Institute, great friends of the member opposite. Their 2015 Waiting Your Turn report revealed that Ontario has the second-shortest overall wait times in Canada.

The results speak for themselves. The investments that we have made, and are making, are making a difference. We will continue to make those investments and improve health care in Ontario.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin-Caledon will come to order.

Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: I realize the government's talking points are, "Everything is fine," but I would love to have the Premier name a single patient, a single nurse, a single physician in the province of Ontario who isn't fed up with this government's cuts.

Let me share with you an article from the Toronto Sun. I think Christina Blizzard summed it up very eloquently when she said this government is taking a "hacksaw" to health care in Ontario—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Come to order.

Please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, if the government members want to heckle about the article on their hacksaw approach to health care, why don't they listen to this quote from the Ontario Health Coalition? Natalie Mehra said, "There's no tracking of the health cuts by the health ministry...."

There is "no planning behind the cuts and no attempt to" get things right. She said "there's no actual plan" for our hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, since it is now clear the Minister of Health isn't doing his job, isn't planning for health care in the province, and given the fact there's going to be a cabinet shuffle, will the Premier show the Minister of Health the door?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Interjections.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, of course, I'm kind of happy that rather than answer it herself, she handed that question to me.

The leader of the official opposition knows—I'm sure he's seen the figures—that the vast majority of the hospitals across this province function and operate within less than 100% occupancy.

In fact, the figures that are currently reflected are the Q4 figures, which represent a period in time, those January, February, March months, where, typically, because of flu season and other factors, we do often see an incremental increase. But even with that, only 11% of the hospitals across the province indicated occupancy pressures.

When you look at the trend, even compared to 2013—or rather between 2014 and 2015—the number of hospital sites that have reported a point in time occupancy rate greater than 100% has decreased by 32% over that period of time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: The Liberals' failure to properly fund health care is leading to hospitals bursting at the seams. Across the province, hospitals are over capacity because of the government's cuts. SickKids, over capacity; London Health Sciences Centre, over capacity; Rouge Valley Health System in Ajax and Pickering, over capacity; the Juravinski Cancer Care Centre in Hamilton, over capacity; the Peterborough Regional Health Centre, Brantford General Hospital, Ottawa Civic and General hospitals, all over capacity.

The Minister of Health has this crisis on his name. This crisis is—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Agriculture, come to order.

Please continue.

Mr. Patrick Brown: This is a crisis created by the Minister of Health. This is because of the incompetent leadership on health care.

My question is this: Will the Premier answer directly? Will she do a favour to Ontario's patients and fire this Minister of Health?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: In our budget, we've allocated an additional \$345 million specifically to the hospital environment. But if you look back a couple of years, since 2013 we've also dramatically increased the number of acute care beds in Ontario. It's increased by approximately 5% of the total number of beds, to almost 20,000 beds now in the province, an increase of nearly 1,000 beds in that time period alone. But other important indicators as well: We have seen an increase, because of population increase, in the number of ER visits, but we've seen that ER wait times have either stayed the same or in fact they've improved.

Those important outcomes that patients are and should be looking to in terms of the quality of care that they're receiving, the re-admission rates, which are staying the same or declining, and our ability to accommodate people in ERs—we are seeing and continuing to see progress in those areas.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Documents obtained by New Democrats show that somewhere in Ontario there is an unnamed hospital that needs \$287 million in repairs to address health and safety concerns, imminent breakdown and code compliance. What hospital is that?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that we have more than 150 hospitals across this province. We're building new hospitals like the new hospital in Oakville, the Humber River Hospital as well. They just had a ground-breaking ceremony in Orangeville for the Headwaters improvements that are being made.

We recognize that going forward in two areas—maintenance, and renovations and repairs—we've increased in the most recent budget an additional \$50 million a year to go towards that. But we're also investing \$12 billion over the next decade to make the kinds of improvements that Ontarians across this province expect to see in their hospitals.

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We have hospitals that are literally months old. We have hospitals that are decades old. We continue to invest in both areas to make sure that they're able to maintain themselves properly, and we're building, renovating, expanding and rebuilding where necessary as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Next on the list of hospitals in dire need of repair is a hospital that needs \$252 million in maintenance repairs. Which hospital is that?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm proud of the work that we're doing across the province in making sure that Ontarians have access to the highest quality of care. We do that as close to home as possible.

The leader of the third party—and certainly the opposition party as well—knows of some of the efforts that we've been making over the last year, including in places like the Trenton hospital, to make sure that the services that those individuals rely on are provided.

In the Leamington hospital there was a decision made, quite frankly, by the hospital itself to close the obstetrics ward. We weren't prepared to accept that as a government and we worked diligently—I worked with the member representing Chatham-Kent-Essex as well—to make sure that those birthing services, those obstetrical services, were maintained. In fact, I think he would probably agree with me that we've even been able to enhance the services that are provided there. We've pro-

vided funding for three new obstetricians to work there in concert with midwives providing that holistic support.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Andrea Horwath: Next on the list is a hospital that urgently needs \$171 million in maintenance. I would just ask the Premier, which hospital is that?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: That's precisely why we committed \$12 billion over the next decade. We have a process in place. The leader of the third party might just want to randomly select hospitals and invest in them; we have a very rigorous process through the ministry, together with Infrastructure Ontario, where we will look at both maintenance and repairs but also those new builds that are required from time to time.

What I don't understand is, if this is such an important issue to the third party, why they voted against our budget that allocated \$50 million in new money on renovations and \$12 billion over 10 years for new builds.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. Last December, the Auditor General said there was \$2.7 billion needed for hospitals in order to bring them up to a good state of repair. Now documents obtained by New Democrats show that deferred maintenance in Ontario hospitals actually exceeds \$3.2 billion, but the government refuses to tell us which hospitals are in the worst shape. In fact, the government said that if they revealed the names of the hospitals, contractors could lose confidence that they would get paid.

Why is the Premier letting hospitals fall into disrepair, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Actually, as the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has said, we recognize that there is a need for upgrades, for maintenance and repair, which is why \$12 billion over the next 10 years has been put in place to actually address those.

There is a process in place whereby the condition of the facilities is made clear. There's obviously an order in which those facilities have to be addressed and that's what the \$12 billion is for. I would have thought that the leader of the third party would think it was important to allocate that money because she understands that there is a need among hospitals.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Auditor General said that the funding wasn't keeping up. In fact, hospitals are having to dip into operating budgets just to cover their capital costs. Now we've learned that the backlog is even higher than what the Auditor General identified in her report. Ontario has 142 hospitals with over \$3 billion in deferred maintenance. The government refuses to reveal which hospitals need the most repairs, and instead of planning ahead, the government has no idea how much more maintenance will be needed over the coming years.

Health care is the government's silent crisis, Speaker. Failing to do urgent repairs will only make it worse. Will

the Premier admit that there is in fact a silent crisis in health care here in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Only the NDP can turn a positive into a negative. I think the reason they're doing that is that they're a little embarrassed that they didn't vote in favour of our budget that allocated \$1 billion of new money to the health care budget and, in addition to that, \$12 billion over the next 10 years. And we have \$50 million on top of an existing \$50 million a year for that important maintenance, renovations and repairs.

It's not surprising that they're taking this position. It's easy when they're the third party to have this sort of rhetoric, but I just need to remind the Ontario public that when they were in power they closed 24% of all acute care beds in this province. They closed 13% of all the mental health beds in this province, reducing hospital funding in their last budget and reducing health care funding in the budget before that. That sounds like a lot of cuts to me.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Nurses are being fired at a rate of three per day. Hospital beds are being closed. Wait times are increasing. And the Liberals are letting hospitals crumble here in the province of Ontario. When people go to the hospital, they're being treated in the hallways. There are labels on the hallways saying, "Hallway room 1," "Hallway room 2," "Hallway room 3." That's what people are dealing with when they go into a hospital here in Ontario in 2016.

How much worse does it have to get for the Premier to admit that there is a crisis in our health care system?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The only crisis would have come if that party had won the last election because they committed to reducing the budget by \$600 million, saying—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: That's what the member from Kitchener-Waterloo said: that \$600 million would come from health care and education. She actually said that she felt she would go to health care first.

The truth is, if you listen to the Ontario college of nurses, the 3,000 more nurses in this province last year, about 8,000 of them in the last several years, many of those in the hospital environment. I just said that we've increased, since 2013, the number of hospital beds in the province, the acute care beds, by more than 1,000. We have among the shortest, if not the shortest, wait times in the entire country.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, come to order.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Try as they might, they can't use rhetoric against facts. The facts demonstrate that we're continuing to invest and we're seeing that progress.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. North Bay Regional Health Centre has borne the brunt of the impact of this government's waste, mismanagement and scandal. Over \$50 million has been cut over the last three years, resulting in cuts to nursing, emergency, cleaning, cataract surgery, psychiatric care and forensic units.

Specifically, the Liberal government has fired 350 full-time staff, including 100 nurses. They've cut 60 hospital beds at our five-year-old facility, a facility the community fundraised for. And now, rumours are swirling that the hospital's cancer clinic will be closed by the end of the year. Can the Premier tell the people of Nipissing that our cancer clinic will not close?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Rumour-mongering like this is not helpful, and I'm sure it's creating anxiety in the community. We have no plans to change the level, quality and location of cancer services at the North Bay Regional Health Centre—the new North Bay Regional Health Centre, by the way. The funding has increased since we came in power to that health centre by 126%, or almost \$100 million.

We're seeing great results. I wish the member opposite would commend the hospital and the physicians, where we're seeing cataract surgery go down by 370 days, a decrease in the wait time of 87%. This is a victory. I'm so proud of this hospital. I'm so proud of the management, the hard-working health care professionals. The member opposite should champion their hard work.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'll share the message with the 100 nurses you fired.

Back to the Premier: These are headlines announcing the Liberal—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Come to order.

Question, please.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: These are the headlines announcing the Liberal government cuts all throughout the north: "Health Sciences North Lays Off 102 Employees and Closes 64 Beds;" "28 Beds Close in Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital;" "St. Joseph's Care Group Cuts 11 RPN Jobs;" "Timmins and District Hospital Cuts 38," followed by another heading, "Timmins Hospital Cuts 40 Jobs;" "Temiskaming Hospital Cuts 15 Jobs, Including Nine Nurses;" "Sault Area Hospital Cuts 73 Staff," followed by another heading, "Sault Hospital Funding Cut By \$10 Million; 35 Positions Cut."

Speaker, this government's waste, mismanagement and scandal have hurt northern families. Will the Premier

tell us today, does she support these cuts to health care or will she shuffle out the Minister of Health?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Start the clock. The member from Nipissing will come to order.

Minister of Health.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I can only imagine what would have happened, Mr. Speaker, if that party had been given the opportunity to cut 100,000 jobs in the broader public sector, and many of those—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Nipissing, second time. Minister of Labour, come to order.

Minister, finish, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: In hospitals alone in northern Ontario—we recognize the need to improve and modernize infrastructure. That's why 23 new hospitals have been built or are under way in the north, Mr. Speaker. Thunder Bay regional hospital, Health Sciences North in Sudbury, North Bay Regional Health Centre, Sioux Lookout health centre, Sault Area Hospital, West Parry Sound Health Centre, Mattawa general hospital—we've increased hospital funding in the north by 54%. We have seven community capital projects under way and—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

MERCURY POISONING

Ms. Sarah Campbell: My question is to the Premier. Today, groups supporting Grassy Narrows First Nation released an independent study commissioned by the First Nation that recommends that the cleaning up of the Wabigoon-English River system of the mercury that was dumped there 50 years ago is possible.

Will the Premier commit today to an action plan to clean up the Wabigoon River so that future generations don't have to grow up poisoned and the community of Grassy Narrows can heal?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the question. I have not yet seen this report. I'm very interested to see the science on which it's based. I have been to Grassy Narrows. We've established an Ontario/Grassy Narrows Mercury Working Group to lead a discussion about what the solutions are, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that there has been testing that has been ongoing, that the group will have a broad scope of inquiry, but that there are complicated issues around the settling of the mercury in the water at Grassy Narrows.

As I say, I don't know the source of the report. I understand there's some suggestion there is still new mercury that is leaking. I don't know the source of that. I look forward to looking at the report. But rest assured that we are very much engaged, even before this report came, on trying to figure out how make sure that people

in Grassy Narrows have clean water and a clean environment to operate in.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Members of Grassy Narrows First Nation will travel this week, as they do every year, the 1,700 kilometres to Queen's Park to once again call on this government to do something, to act on the contamination of their traditional fishing and hunting lands.

During this time last year, the Premier said, "The scientists have said to us there are questions about how to actually do the cleanup because ... the sediment at the bottom can actually cause further damage." Yes, Speaker, this needs to be done very carefully, but here today a report written by scientists says that it is possible to clean up the river. In the press today, the response from the Ministry of the Environment to this new report is word for word the same as the ministry comment from February. How is this possible? Truth and reconciliation: It means being honest with our relationships with our First Nations partners.

Will the Premier commit today to the cleanup of the mercury in the Wabigoon River once and for all?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This is an extremely important issue. It's an extremely important issue, obviously, because of the health of the people who live at Grassy Narrows; it's extremely important in terms of the economy of Grassy Narrows. I know the member opposite is aware of that. I haven't seen this particular report but, as I said, the working group that has been established will have to take this information into account.

If there is a way to clean up that river without disturbing the mercury and making the situation worse, then obviously we want to look at that. When I was at Grassy Narrows, that was one of the first questions I asked: Is there a way of cleaning up this mercury so that it doesn't actually further contaminate the water, the fish and the other wildlife? Obviously, we will look at the information, the ministry will look at the information, but the working group that is tasked with this specific subject is going to take this into account and look for a way forward.

NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT PROGRAM

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. Ontario's Newcomer Settlement Program supports agencies like the Centre for Immigrant and Community Services, better known as CICS, in my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt. This agency has provided almost 50 years of comprehensive, diverse programs for newcomers of all ages. These settlement programs support communities to integrate in our province. Since 2003, our government has invested over \$82 million in the Newcomer Settlement Program. Each year, nearly 80,000 immigrants benefit from our investment.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can he please inform the House what the Newcomer Settlement Program is doing to support new Canadians?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the member from Agincourt for asking the question. Over the next two years, 2016-18, our Newcomer Settlement Program will provide \$20 million in funding to support 114 projects across Ontario. The funding will improve access to services by providing support to 97 settlement agencies, of which 19 are new. It will double the number of francophone service providers to attract and integrate francophone newcomers. It will also provide a threefold increase in settlement funding to expand services in northern Ontario and improve service access for vulnerable immigrant populations such as refugees.

This is just beginning. We will continue to support refugees as they integrate with Ontario communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you to the minister for the response. It is reassuring to see that our government understands the importance of supporting agencies like CICS and the Chinese Professionals Association of Canada to help newcomers settle in our community.

I'm also very pleased to see that the NSP-funded services are available to a broad range of newcomer groups, such as permanent residents, Canadian citizens, refugees and refugee claimants, provincial nominees and temporary foreign workers, including live-in caregivers and international students, because many of my constituents of Scarborough-Agincourt have benefited from these programs.

Organizations funded through the NSP have a proven track record of providing quality services to newcomers, possess the organizational capacity to deliver quality services and demonstrate sustainability and appropriate financial management.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can he please outline the Orientation to Ontario immigrant services and what it offers to new Canadians?

Hon. Michael Chan: The NSP has been a great success. The Orientation to Ontario program is a service that helps current recent immigrants get quality information about settling in Ontario. The program is coordinated by COSTI Immigrant Services and is delivered in local communities by a network of 19 settlement agencies.

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An estimated 2,500 recent newcomers in 24 Ontario communities will benefit from the program in 2015-16. The program features a workshop series on settlement-related topics and a workbook for participants that includes settlement information and planning tools. There is also a website that is a great source for pre-arrival and settlement information.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Premier. This government's record on health care has been disastrous. The Minister of Health has placed this system into a state of perpetual crisis. Last year alone in London, Windsor and the rest of southwestern Ontario, we've seen a cut to health care services and longer wait times. Due to this

minister's freezing of hospital budgets, we've seen hospitals forced to cut staff or cut services in order to balance the budgets.

St. Joseph's hospital in London has had a \$17-million budget shortfall which saw 60 nurses fired. Windsor cut 120 nursing jobs with a \$20-million budget shortfall. All knee, hip and joint replacement surgeries were cancelled or postponed for January, February and March because of a lack of funds.

The Premier has not answered the questions from the member from Nipissing or the member from Simcoe North. Does she have confidence in this minister and will she replace him?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. It gives me an opportunity, because it has been some time since I've been able to speak about the new investments in the 2016-17 budget, \$1 billion, so that our entire health care budget is roughly \$52 billion. It's substantial to say the least. But, as part of that \$1 billion, we're investing in a whole set of things.

I've spoken, obviously, on the \$345 million going to hospitals and the \$12 billion going to the new capital investments, but I haven't had an opportunity to say things like 85 million of new dollars for that important area of recruitment and retention of nurses, of occupational therapists, of dietitians, many of them who are in the front line, who are working in our family health teams or other similar environments; or, importantly, the work of my parliamentary assistant, the member from Ottawa Centre—I hope—

Interjection: Ottawa South.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: An investment of \$75 million to fund new hospice beds across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: The only person who has confidence in this minister is the Premier herself. Just talk to the health care professionals across the province. They are disgusted with the lack of access that they have had due to this government and the public attacks this government has had on not only doctors, but also pharmacists in this province. The Premier seems fine with this action.

We have seen the stem cell transplant system fail, resulting in deaths in this province, and the Premier is fine with this. We've seen this minister nurture a culture of fear in the home care system and the Premier is fine with this. But the line was drawn a few months ago when Pete Verberne, a 61-year-old Alzheimer's patient, was forced to sleep on the floor in restraints for eight days because the hospital was understaffed and over capacity. Even the member from London North Centre says this was absolutely unnecessary.

The health care system has been in perpetual crisis for years. There have been cuts in services, cuts in nurses and our hospitals are over capacity—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you, Minister.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Obviously, it's a big question, and I'll do my best to answer it to the satisfaction of the member opposite. But we are investing so much money in new investments that are relevant to Ontarians. I think, at the end of the day, what Ontarians look to are the outcomes. Are they able to access a family doctor or a nurse practitioner? Ninety-four percent of them of them are. In fact, just the year before last, the most recent figures show 900 new physicians began practice in this province. That's roughly almost four times the rate of population growth.

So we're making investments in our doctors. We're continuing to increase the line for compensation for doctors. There were 3,000 more nurses practising in our province last year alone, according to the Ontario College of Nurses.

We're continuing to make those important investments in people, in property and in the facilities that people depend on across this province.

WATER QUALITY

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. This morning, we all heard Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard, the very eloquent executive director of the Native Women's Association, tell us what we already knew: that 90 First Nations communities in Ontario do not have safe drinking water. In Attawapiskat, it contributed to a rash of skin lesions for young children. Here in Ontario, in 2016, First Nations children are sick because of untreated water. Does the Premier think that it is acceptable that, after 13 years of Liberal government, First Nation Ontarians in 90 communities still do not have safe drinking water?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I do not think that it is acceptable that any Ontarian anywhere in the province would not have access to clean, drinkable water. It is unacceptable to me, absolutely.

At the root of the ceremony that happened this morning and all of the work that we have done as a government to work with First Nations and, quite frankly, with the previous federal government to engage them to try to get them to work with us—we've moved ahead, Mr. Speaker. We have put in place a plan to address drinking water, and I think now we have a federal government that will work with us on that.

But it is absolutely our objective to address the challenges of drinking water on-reserve, to take all of the expertise that we have in Ontario and the technology that we have and work with the federal government and the First Nations to put in place the right water supply for each of the First Nations in the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: We all know that water is a basic human right. The rest of us in Ontario, we take it for granted. But when I asked during estimates for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, I'm told that it is a federal responsibility. But you know what, Speaker? Infrastruc-

ture needs in First Nations are an Ontario responsibility. We don't need to pass the buck on that one.

I would like the Premier to tell this House, when will First Nation Ontarians, living in 90 First Nation communities—communities like Curve Lake, like Pikangikum, like Shoal Lake 40, like Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug—have safe drinking water?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite might know that each situation is somewhat different. For example, in Pikangikum, it's my understanding, when I was there, that there is clean water but the water doesn't flow to people's houses. In that case, there's an issue of building the infrastructure and making sure that that clean water can actually get to the houses.

In other situations, there are water treatment plants—

Interjection: So that's acceptable?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's not acceptable. It's not acceptable, but the situation is different community by community.

That means we have to work with the communities and with the federal government to make sure that, if it's the transportation of water or whether it's the water system itself, whether it's the training of the folks on the ground to make sure that the troubleshooting can happen—all of that has to be done and it must be done in partnership with the First Nations and with the federal government. That's the work that we're doing in our government, Mr. Speaker.

HOUSING SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Chris Ballard: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Last week, I was pleased to be with the minister in Aurora for a funding announcement of almost \$1 million over two years for a project that will offer a number of housing alternatives for people with a range of complex developmental disability needs in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora.

The Why Wait demonstration project is a collaboration between York Region Lifetime Independent Facilitation, York Support Services Network and Montage Support Services. Minister, I understand that this project is part of the broader Developmental Services Housing Task Force initiative that you mentioned in the House this year. Can the minister please provide us with an update on the recent work of the housing task force and the progress being made for residential services in Ontario?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you to the member for Newmarket–Aurora for the question and for hosting me last week to announce the funding for the Why Wait demonstration project.

As the member knows, these projects are part of a recent announcement of the second round of six creative community-based housing initiatives for adults with

developmental disabilities. Our government has committed up to \$6 million over two years for demonstration or research projects which includes \$2.13 million to support these six projects in Ottawa, Essex, Sarnia-Lambton and Newmarket-Aurora. This is part of our three-year, \$810-million investment to support the transformation and modernization of developmental services. The Developmental Services Housing Task Force has been doing extensive work in the area of creative residential services, because we know that there is no one-size-fits-all housing solution for adults with developmental disabilities.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Minister, for outlining the work this government and your ministry is doing.

In conversation with residents and leaders in my community, it's very clear the importance that adequate access to residential services has on the lives of individuals living with disabilities and their families. There continues to be a need for more creative residential options and day supports and respite services. This is something that individuals, their families and the developmental services sector have known for a long time. However, the government's \$810-million investment is making a tremendous difference in the lives of thousands of Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please elaborate how efforts like the Developmental Services Housing Task Force will create more opportunities that focus on inclusion, choice and independence?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: We know that individuals with developmental disabilities have unique needs and that there is a demand for a broader range of housing solutions. This is why the six projects selected cover a wide range of supports, including developing a DSW co-op, so that families have a pool of trained and qualified staff to hire using their Passport funding; using technology to increase independence and quality of life; and digital tools to support francophone families in their search for housing.

I'd like to thank the hard work of agencies, families, community partners and the housing task force members. We have an opportunity to expand our knowledge and learn how creative partnerships can help us provide new housing support options. I look forward to future partnerships that we can learn from so that they can be replicated to help more people in the future.

NURSES

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Premier. Day after day, I hear from constituents in my riding and across this province about the harsh reality of this government's incompetence, whether it's freezing budgets at mid-sized hospitals like Ross Memorial; Peterborough Regional Health Centre being forced to eliminate 153 nursing positions; 61 RNs cut from St. Joseph's in

Hamilton; or 70 nurses cut at the Trillium health centre in Mississauga. No area of this province has been spared from the government's failure to deliver on the home care, long-term care and mental health care that our patients need.

The minister has failed his mandate to ensure that the needs of Ontario's patients be at the centre of our health system. While the Premier pledged to be different than her predecessor, we see that she is running down the path away from our patients, ruthlessly firing 1,400 nurses in the last year. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier finally support the growing needs of Ontario's patients?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, try as I might, Mr. Speaker, I just have to go back to this allegation from both opposition parties that somehow we fired 1,400 nurses over the last year. Again, are you telling me that you don't believe the Ontario college of nurses, the body responsible for regulating nurses? On their website they've indicated that 3,000 more nurses—the majority of those in hospitals—are working in this province. I'm a little dismayed, I'm a little perplexed as to why they just dislike, don't trust and don't believe the Ontario college of nurses, because I think that that's probably the best and most independent source of information that we have.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier: The government is out of touch. Those numbers are true. I didn't make them up; I didn't pull them out of thin air. But you no longer—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Come to order.

Please finish—and put the question.

Ms. Laurie Scott: As a nurse, I firmly believe that our registered nurses, our nurse practitioners, our registered practical nurses and nursing students deserve our support and respect. If there are fewer nurses, then there are fewer nursing hours. That means the number of hours of care for the patient is cut. After 13 years, this government has become both financially and morally bankrupt. The accessibility and equality of patient care have deteriorated, and they continue to crumble.

Back to the Premier: Since you haven't answered the member from Simcoe North, the member from Nipissing or the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London, are you going to remove the Minister of Health?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I would imagine the member opposite is, therefore, a member of the College of Nurses of Ontario. So call them up, tell them you're a paid member and ask them how many more nurses are working in our hospitals and working in our communities last year alone. It's 3,000 net—not any gross number that the member opposite might want to talk about; a net increase.

But that's understandable, because maybe her relationship isn't that great, because it was her government that fired 6,000 nurses when they were in power. It was her former government that described them as out of time, out of sorts, hula hoops, and it was her government that closed 10,000 hospital beds.

You talk about devastation in the hospital closures. We're rebuilding the mess that they created.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. The government has introduced its election reform bill. It shuts down critics, helps the Liberal Party and makes it nearly impossible for non-partisan citizens' groups to get their message out. Instead, it opens the doors to partisan government advertising dominating the airwaves. It cracks down on public advocates, but leaves the door open to lobbyists.

This legislation is clearly about helping the Liberal Party. Can the Premier explain why they refuse to move ahead with a transparent, non-partisan panel?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, I remain baffled by the question from the NDP, because to every single opportunity that was given to them to participate in a conversation around what the bill should contain, they said no. They refused to engage in any conversation whatsoever, because they probably want to delay the process, because they have so much housecleaning to do on their end that they won't engage in the process. The official opposition engaged in the process. The Green Party of Ontario was quite engaged in the process, but the NDP? No, no, no. No substantive ideas, but stall and delay tactics.

We have put forward a very robust plan to consult the public. As you know, Speaker, the bill has been tabled and has been referred to the standing committee for consideration over the summer months. We will be debating the motion dealing with that, on which I sought unanimous consent, which was denied by the NDP. We look forward to working and listening to Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: We fully understand that the Liberals remain baffled on a number of issues, but this process is about restoring confidence in the electoral system. The truth of the matter is that the Liberals wrote this legislation behind closed doors. They didn't consult a single expert. They didn't consult Ontarians. They didn't listen to the concerns raised by the opposition. This is about helping the Liberal Party and shutting down any public criticism. Now they're taking control of the committee process.

Will the Premier put partisanship aside and open this process up to a non-partisan panel, chaired by an independent person and not under the complete legislative control and total veto of the Liberal Party of Ontario?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Yes, Speaker, we remain baffled by NDP flips and flops every single day. It baffles every single one of us, because they keep flipping and flopping on all their positions.

Speaker, when we sent them a letter inviting them to a meeting on the draft legislation, they said no. When we reached out to them on May 2 asking them to attend a meeting on the draft legislation, they said no. Then, I sent them documents from my briefings with the official opposition and the Green Party and asked for their input. They said no.

But apparently, they have some sort of suggestion out on a Facebook page addressed to the Premier and she still hasn't received the letter. This is how the NDP has been stalling the whole democratic process around ensuring that Ontarians get a say on the draft legislation as soon as possible. This afternoon, we will be drafting the motion so that as of June 6—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question?

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ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As part of the Climate Change Action Plan, cap-and-trade proceeds will be invested transparently into initiatives that will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These investments will create good jobs in sectors like clean tech and construction, help small and medium-sized businesses reduce greenhouse gas pollution, and help households save money on energy costs. Last week, the government shared the first set of these planned investments that will utilize these proceeds to drive our goal to fight climate change.

Building on the success of the Green Investment Fund's dedication of \$92 million for energy retrofits to social housing across this province, Minister McMeekin and Minister Murray announced a further plan to increase the energy efficiency of not only social housing but also private rental apartments.

Mr. Speaker, through you, will the minister share with the House the details of this investment and speak to how it will reduce costs?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: That's a terrific question. What can I say? That's a good question; I've got a good answer.

Of course, reducing emissions, as everybody in this House knows, is a key priority for our government and that starts with social housing and select units in the private housing sector. That's why, as part of our climate action plan, we intend to provide up to \$400 million for apartment building retrofits and \$500 million for social housing retrofits. That's going to help with installing energy-efficient boilers, windows, insulation and lighting.

To be quite frank, investing cap-and-trade proceeds in this way is really going to help to not only provide

additional access to affordable housing but do it in a clean and environmentally sensitive way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you to the minister for that answer. When we can invest in both combatting climate change and helping low-income Ontarians with the transition to a lower-carbon economy, I think that's a huge win-win.

This announcement is part of the soon-to-be-released Climate Change Action Plan. The CCAP will outline the actions we are taking to ensure Ontario reaches its greenhouse gas emissions target and will focus on making it easier and faster for consumers and industry to access new low-carbon technologies. The minister has committed that the action plan will be out before the House rises.

Can the minister please inform the House on the action plan and the real, positive benefits it will have on people's lives and in the fight against climate change?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: To the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank the member for Barrie who has been such a great champion. It's interesting: We visited homes in her constituency that are net-zero or low-carbon homes. The sale advantage is that they come without a heating or cooling bill.

I think it was a humbling experience for Minister McMeekin and I, when we were at Green Phoenix housing, because they have retrofitted that. And why did they do it? Because their heating costs were becoming expensive for their low-income tenants. By reducing their emissions by 40%, they dramatically cut the costs of living in the home. And what they discovered was a low greenhouse gas emissions home was very inexpensive, affordable housing building to do. So there is lots to be learned from people out in the community.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Lorne Coe: To the Premier: In February, I asked the Minister of Health why the government cut jobs at Ontario Shores. The minister's response was an answer that sounded as though it was drafted in an ivory tower.

Despite the minister's protests to the contrary, when you cut front-line services at hospitals, wait times get longer. That's just a fact, Mr. Speaker.

My constituents in Whitby-Oshawa sent a strong message to the government that they're tired of this government's failed policies which lead to longer wait times and watered-down services, that they're tired of waste and mismanagement.

The Premier still hasn't answered. Will she shuffle out the Minister of Health?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: In our most recent budget, we announced an allocation, an increase, in the budget to Ontario Shores of over \$2 million. It comes on the heels of some other important investments: an in-patient addic-

tions investment that we recently made; the extremely important eating disorder in-patient program that now exists at Ontario Shores. I know, quite frankly, that that institution, that hospital environment, which provides such important, high-quality care, is important not just to the residents of that region but to the entire province. Ontario Shores is one of the hospitals that we're focusing a tremendous amount of attention on to make sure that it is, on an up-to-date basis, providing that high quality of care that Ontarians can and should expect.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds-Grenville on a point of order.

Mr. Steve Clark: Yes, point of order, Speaker: I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, constituents of my riding of Leeds-Grenville. I have a delegation of my second Girls' Government—they're from three high schools in Brockville—and also representatives from Girls Inc. of Upper Canada. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I'd like you to invite them every day.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nickel Belt on a point of order.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to correct my record. This morning, I said that children in Attawapiskat were suffering from skin lesions. That was a mistake. I meant to say Kashechewan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The member has every right to correct her own record.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Speaker. I invite you and my colleagues here in the House to join me in wishing a very happy birthday to the member for Burlington. I'm told that this is the 25th anniversary of her 29th birthday. So happy birthday to you.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to welcome today Marlene Gallyot and Jeff Peller. Welcome to the members' gallery.

LONDON KNIGHTS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am sure that all members of this House will want to join me in expressing our pride and congratulations to the London Knights, who won the Memorial Cup on the weekend.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore on a point of order.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome to the House a constituent from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Mai Nguyen. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome two guests of mine from Belleville—I'm sure they were there in 1999 when the Bulls won the OHL championship. Genevieve Pouliot and Stanley Jones are here. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'd like to welcome—I know they're somewhere in the building, but they were here before—former member Rob Milligan, now a teacher at Campbellford high school, and his class.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: During constituency week, I'm pleased to say that the member from Trinity–Spadina had his birthday. Happy birthday to the member from Trinity–Spadina.

CONSUL GENERAL OF TURKEY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Etobicoke North.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I would take this opportunity to respectfully invite all colleagues to a reception today from 5 to 7 p.m., hosted by His Excellency Erdeniz Şen, the consul general of Turkey to Ontario.

AFRICAN UNION FLAG-RAISING

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I just want to remind members that there's an African Union flag-raising here at the Legislature today at 12 o'clock.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I showed a little bit of leniency, just in this particular situation, due to the fact that we did not have introductions because of our ceremony this morning. But I'm going to remind members that we do have an agreement that we use the five minutes for introductions at that time. I would hope that you would help me in sticking to that. I'm lenient in the five minutes, if there's a large number, but after that, it's off-bounds.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1200 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bill Walker: They were here earlier this morning: teachers Heather Bender and Michael Foulds and students from John Diefenbaker secondary school in Hanover.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm very pleased to welcome the students from St. Sylvester school; grade 5 and grade 8 students are here this afternoon. I want to recognize their teachers Oycie Povo and Jeanette Harrietha, as well as four girls from the Girls' Government: Katrina, Briana, Madonna and Juno. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm really honoured to have with me two special people from my riding: Katelyn and Kylie O'Neil. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to introduce Katee Carrasco from my constituency office, who's in the gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park, Katee.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm pleased to rise today to highlight May as Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month.

MS affects three times as many women as men and is the most common neurological disease among young Canadians, typically affecting those between ages 15 to 40. Close to 100,000 Canadians are living with MS.

MS occurs when the insulating covers of the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord are damaged, resulting in physical, mental and psychiatric problems. Patients' lives are severely affected. Symptoms can include double vision, blindness in one eye, muscle weakness and trouble with sensation or coordination.

As of today, there is no cure for MS. There are, however, treatments, medications and physical therapy available to assist those who are suffering with this chronic disease. Government needs to work to reduce the bureaucracy that is limiting access to these new medications to treat MS.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada for their leadership and in their advancements to finding a cure and enabling those affected by MS to help enhance their quality of life.

As previously mentioned, MS affects three times as many women as men, which is why WAMS was created. WAMS stands for Women Against Multiple Sclerosis and has been an extremely successful advocate over the past decade.

The red carnation is a symbol of MS. Every year, the MS Society of Canada runs the carnation campaign, which helps assist with donations to fight to end MS.

I encourage all Ontarians to participate in the MS walks in their communities and to get involved to help spread the word to increase awareness surrounding multiple sclerosis.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, let me tell you about a bike ride that's taking place. It started in Windsor last Wednesday; it will end here at the Legislature this Wednesday. Injured workers Richard Hudon and Peter Page are making the trip along with injured-workers advocate Allen Jones. Their route is a grueling 600 kilometres, and they have been meeting with injured workers along the way. They've made stops in Chatham, Wallaceburg, Sarnia, London, Brantford and St. Catharines. They'll be in Hamilton at 4 o'clock today at the workers' monument at city hall. Tomorrow, they will be stopping in Mississauga.

On Wednesday, Injured Workers' Day, if you haven't made lunch plans yet, join them outside on the lawn for pizza before they're joined by other injured workers for a rally at the Ministry of Labour. The purpose behind the ride is to raise awareness for the many issues involving workers' compensation in our province.

On a final note, we lost a fierce advocate for the working class last week in Tecumseh. George LaBute was 94. He was one of the leaders of the Ford strike in Windsor in 1945. The UAW was out for 99 days. That strike led to the Rand formula in Ontario: If you belong to a union, you pay union dues.

George LaBute was a labour historian. His garage is a museum to labour history. He was also a former town councillor in Tecumseh and a veteran of the Second World War.

God bless you, George LaBute.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Monte McNaughton: A letter dated July 28, 2015, from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and written to the president and CEO of the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance, has only recently been made public. The letter recognizes the outstanding emergency department performance that was achieved at Sydenham District Hospital. Within its own category of hospital, the wait times in the emergency department at Sydenham District Hospital were reduced more than any other in the province. Unfortunately, this hospital, which is efficiently delivering vital care in my riding, is under threat of closure.

The Wallaceburg-Walpole Island health coalition recently conducted a survey that asked thousands of respondents whether Ontario's government must act to stop the closure of Sydenham District Hospital's emergency department and restore funding, services and staff to meet the community's needs for care. The result was a unanimous and resounding yes.

I wish to extend my congratulations to the doctors and nurses of the emergency department at Sydenham

District Hospital and to assure the people of Wallaceburg, North Kent, South Lambton and Walpole Island that I will continue work to ensure this standard of care is there for them. The emergency department is critical and the 24-hour, seven-day-a-week, fully functional emergency department in Wallaceburg must be kept open.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I very often rise in this Legislature to speak about great things and the people in my riding. Today, unfortunately, it isn't the case. Today, I must rise again to bring to attention this government's failure, half measures and broken promises that have had a negative impact on the people of my riding and many of those who travel through our riding.

The government's failure to complete the widening of Highway 3 between the town of Essex and the town of Leamington continues to be a public safety issue. People, unfortunately, are dying on this road. Just in the last 30 days, in the last month, we've had two separate multi-vehicle fatalities on that very stretch of road. Many of the members who are in here today sat with my predecessor, Bruce Crozier, who dedicated his entire career to the expansion and the widening of that highway. It is aptly named after Bruce because of his efforts. Unfortunately, this government has stalled at the third phase, the final phase that would stretch from Essex to Leamington, widening that not only for commerce, not only for commuters, but for the safety of the individuals who are on road.

It is our belief that the government is dragging its heels on this project, but we can't understand why, because it is a government project. It was a promise they made to our community some 10 years ago. We would like to see it finished.

We call on the government and implore the Minister of Transportation to fulfill his promise, finish what Bruce Crozier started, get the funds flowing to our community and ensure that the public can travel safely down that corridor from Leamington to Essex and Windsor, so that we can ensure the road is feasible and safe for all commuters.

SCHOOL TOURS

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Last week, as you know, was a constituency week for members, and I took the opportunity to visit a number of schools in Kitchener Centre, including Courtland Avenue Public School, Westheights, and St. Mark and St. Paul Catholic elementary schools.

I had the chance to speak to five different classes in this whirlwind tour, all taking place in one day, and it was a wonderful way to meet so many bright, young students, who ranged from grade 2 up to grade 8. They were very interested in the political process. They asked a lot of really great questions, such as, "What's a typical day like for you as an MPP?" and "Is there a lot of stress in your job?" And, of course, the inevitable question:

"How much money do you make?" I was happy to answer all of those questions.

A couple of the grade 5 classes who were part of the tour are taking the unit in government. They were able to identify the various levels of government. They clearly understood all of the different responsibilities, federally, provincially and municipally. I asked each class if there was any message they wanted me to deliver back to Queen's Park. One young man by the name of Hank said that he wanted me to tell the Premier that he thought she was doing a great job, so I promised him that I would do that.

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I encourage all students to stay politically engaged and to come visit us here at Queen's Park—it's their Legislature—and also consider serving as a page in our page program, like the young people who are here. Hopefully we'll be seeing these bright, young faces in the near future here at Queen's Park.

COMMEMORATIONS IN 2017

Mr. Toby Barrett: In a few—six—months, we commence celebration of not only Canada's 150th birthday, but also the 225th anniversary of the founding of Ontario. Of course, plans are afoot and I encourage all to get involved, to come up with some projects, large and small, to mark these milestones in our society.

The Constitutional Act of 1791 divided the British colony into two governments. West of the Ottawa River became Upper Canada, now Ontario, with its first Parliament meeting in Newark, now Niagara-on-the-Lake, on September 17, 1792. The first Parliament was opened by Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe reading the speech from the throne. On July 1, 1867, 75 years after Ontario's Legislature first met, church bells rang and four million people celebrated the creation of the Dominion of Canada.

In a few short weeks, we celebrate Canada Day, the original Dominion Day, to mark Confederation. Locally, both Caledonia and Port Dover have gigantic parades attended by thousands. In fact, Port Dover has been hosting its Callithumpian Parade every year since 1867. Some claim it's the longest-running Canada Day parade in the country. Canada's sesquicentennial will kick off where a lot of this began, in my riding in the historic village of Vittoria. I encourage all: Let's get involved for 2017.

AMATEUR SPORTS

Mr. Granville Anderson: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House and celebrate the achievements of constituents from the great riding of Durham. I recently heard some very good news about one of our highly successful youth sports teams: The Durham Attack under-14 infinity girls' volleyball team has been dominating tournaments both in Ontario and in the United States so far this year.

Their recent successes include winning gold in their division at the Volleyball Canada east national championship in Ottawa just a few weeks ago and winning bronze at the President's Day Cup in Dayton, Ohio, back in February. Since 1992, the Durham Attack team has been one of Canada's premier volleyball clubs. This team is dedicated to teaching its young athletes the skills they need to be successful on and off the volleyball court by developing character through the pursuit of excellence. The team's success is a testament to all of the young people, and all that young people can do when they are supported in an environment of empowerment, encouragement and fair play.

Congratulations to everyone on the team, and congratulations to the coaches and other people of the community that support all of our sports teams.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: Having had the honour to serve as the Minister of Transportation and also the minister responsible for ServiceOntario, I'm very much aware of the services that ServiceOntario provides.

Having served on the Treasury Board for very many years, I do understand that sometimes we need to make tough and difficult decisions. However, we must make all these decisions in the best interest of the people of Ontario. The people of Ontario cannot be well served by reducing service, and especially for the most needy and deserving people in the society. In addition, we need to make service reduction decisions only after consultation with the affected communities.

There are also specific ServiceOntario centres which are not only important for the services they provide, but are also very vital for the business community around them. One such ServiceOntario centre is located at Westdale Mall in my riding of Mississauga—Erindale, which the ministry has decided to close. This ServiceOntario centre attracts consumers to the mall, which supports the other small business entrepreneurs in the shopping centre. This reality has led to a rise in business for small business owners in the mall due to the ServiceOntario centre's presence in that mall. Without the ServiceOntario, Westdale Mall will be put under tremendous strain for the viability and existence of this small and essential neighbourhood.

I would like to ask the ministry to reconsider this decision and the government to make sure that the people that they serve are protected and the community and the mall is protected as well.

RUSSIAN-CANADIAN CULTURAL AID SOCIETY

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I'm proud to rise today to recognize the work of the Russian-Canadian Cultural Aid Society. The RCCAS was founded in 1950 as a non-profit organization and is run entirely by volunteers. The foundation exists for the benefit of the Russian-Canadian

community by providing the means and facilities necessary for the actualization and cultural development of the community.

In all of its activities and undertakings, the foundation is guided by ideals that incorporate affirmation of cultural identity and principles of traditional Russian and Canadian values. Its mission is to promote and maintain rich Russian cultural traditions and help new immigrants integrate into the Canadian way of life.

Yesterday was the grand opening of Russian House Toronto, in my riding of York Centre, at Earl Bales Park. The house was founded to provide much-needed facilities for fostering the preservation and promotion of Russian culture, traditions and language. The space will be used for concerts, lectures, dancing and other activities to serve the more than 118,000 Russians living in the greater Toronto area. English events will also take place to help showcase Russian culture.

Cultural centres like Russian House Toronto are essential to building community, educating and protecting diversity. I am truly grateful to all those involved whose dedication and hard work resulted in the establishment of such an important and rewarding cultural space.

SPECIAL REPORT, FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, during constituency week, the following report was tabled:

On May 26, 2016, a special report from the French Language Services Commissioner entitled *Active Offer of Services in French: the Cornerstone for Achieving the Objectives of Ontario's French Languages Services Act*.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Mr. Milczyn from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs presents the committee's report as follows and moves its adoption:

Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended: Bill 181, An Act to amend the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and to make complementary amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 181, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales et apportant des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois*.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

REPRESENTATION AMENDMENT ACT (WAHNAPITAE FIRST NATION), 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA REPRÉSENTATION ÉLECTORALE (PREMIÈRE NATION DE WAHNAPITAE)

Madame Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 206, An Act to amend the Representation Act, 2015 to include the Wahnapiatae Indian Reserve No. 11 in the electoral district of Nickel Belt rather than in the electoral district of Timiskaming-Cochrane / *Projet de loi 206, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2015 sur la représentation électorale pour inclure la réserve indienne Wahnapiatae n° 11 dans la circonscription électorale de Nickel Belt au lieu de la circonscription électorale de Timiskaming-Cochrane*.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

M^{me} France Gélinas: This should have been done when we changed the boundaries to the southern ridings, but here it is. The bill amends the schedule to the Representation Act, 2015, which sets out the 11 northern electoral districts in Ontario. The amendments change the boundaries of two electoral districts so that the Wahnapiatae First Nation Reserve, known as Wahnapiatae Indian Reserve No. 11, is included in the electoral district of Nickel Belt rather than the electoral district of Timiskaming-Cochrane. I fully agree.

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TREATIES RECOGNITION WEEK ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SEMAINE DE RECONNAISSANCE DES TRAITÉS

Mr. Zimmer moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 207, An Act to proclaim Treaties Recognition Week / *Projet de loi 207, Loi proclamant la Semaine de reconnaissance des traités*.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister for a short statement.

Hon. David Zimmer: The bill proclaims the first full week in November each year as Treaties Recognition Week. I will speak in more detail later in the afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The normal procedure is to simply say you're going to speak at ministers' statements.

HAROLD COLES INC. ACT, 2016

Miss Taylor moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr46, An Act to revive Harold Coles Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Liz Sandals: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Education is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I move that notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items 46 and 55 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Sandals moves that notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items 46 and 55 be waived. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Liz Sandals: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice with respect to private members' public bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Education is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I move that the order of the House dated December 10, 2015, referring Bill 149, An Act to establish an advisory committee to make recommendations on the jury recommendations made in the inquest into the death of Rowan Stringer, to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be discharged; and

That the order of the House dated April 7, 2016, referring Bill 180, An Act to proclaim a Workers Day of Mourning, to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be discharged; and

That the order of the House dated April 7, 2016, referring Bill 182, An Act to proclaim Ontario Down Syndrome Day, to the Standing Committee on Social Policy be discharged; and

That Bills 149, 180 and 182 be instead referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy; and

That the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet in Toronto on Thursday June 2, 2016, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 149; from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 180; from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 182; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bills 149, 180 and 182:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario Parliamentary Channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 5 p.m. on Wednesday, June 1, 2016; and

—That witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee on a first-come, first-served basis; and

—That each witness receive up to 10 minutes for their presentation followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

—That the deadline for written submissions be 4 p.m. on Thursday, June 2, 2016; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bills with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 noon on Friday, June 3, 2016; and

That the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, June 6, 2016, from 2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 149, from 2:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 180 and from 3 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 182; and

That the committee shall report Bills 149, 180 and 182 to the House on Tuesday, June 7, 2016; and

That in the event that the committee fails to report any of the bills on that day, such bills shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That the order for third reading of any of these bills may be called the same day; and

That 60 minutes shall be allotted to the third reading stage of each of the bills, apportioned equally among the recognized parties, at the end of which time the Speaker shall put the question for third reading of each bill respectively, without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Sandals moves that the order of the House dated December 10—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispense. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Liz Sandals: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 71(a) and 81(b), the order for second reading of Bill 207, An Act to proclaim Treaties Recognition Week, may be called today; and

That up to 90 minutes shall be allotted to the second reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the

recognized parties, at the end of which time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceeding and, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill; and

That the order for third reading of Bill 207 be immediately called; and

That the question be put on the motion for third reading without debate or amendment; and

That the votes on second and third reading may not be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Sandals moves that, notwithstanding standing order 71(a) and 81(b), the order for second reading of Bill 207—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispense. Agreed? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF CRIME WEEK

SEMAINE DES VICTIMES ET SURVIVANTS D'ACTES CRIMINELS

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I rise in the House today to speak about a significant event that is taking place right now, both here in Ontario and across the country: Victims and Survivors of Crime Week.

C'est l'occasion de faire connaître les problèmes auxquels se trouvent confrontées les victimes d'actes criminels ainsi que les services, programmes et lois en place pour leur venir en aide. Cette semaine s'appelait auparavant la Semaine nationale de sensibilisation aux victimes d'actes criminels, mais son nom a changé pour inclure les survivants. Ce changement de nom nous rappelle que les survivants d'actes criminels sont aussi des victimes d'actes criminels.

Victims can overcome trauma and grow to a place of strength. With support, there is hope for healing and recovery.

1330

The theme for this week is "The Power of Our Voices," which recognizes that together, we can raise our voices and say no to the injustice experienced by victims of crime, say no to heartbreak and hopelessness, and say yes to helping survivors move forward with their lives.

Cette année, nous marquons également le 20^e anniversaire de la Charte des droits des victimes, qui a force de loi depuis 1996 et qui reconnaît les besoins des victimes d'actes criminels.

La charte contient des principes que le système de justice doit respecter à l'égard des victimes d'actes criminels : courtoisie, compassion et respect.

Later this week, I will have the honour of presenting awards to individuals who are doing outstanding work in the area of victim services. These annual awards, taking place this Thursday, recognize the people who work tirelessly to help victims of crime and their families.

Certains des récipiendaires sont des victimes qui, par leur dévouement et leur courage, ont contribué aux services aux victimes en tant que survivants, leaders, ou modèles exemplaires. D'autres sont des bénévoles, des professionnels et des organismes qui offrent aux victimes des soutiens et des services quand elles en ont le plus besoin.

This event also helps raise the profile of programs and services available to assist victims across the province; for example, Victim Crisis Assistance Ontario. Working closely with local police, staff and volunteers, it provides support to victims 24 hours a day. This can include ensuring that victims have a safe place to stay or helping them with safety planning. It is small acts like these that can be so important during a crisis.

Devenir victime ou perdre un être proche dans un crime violent n'est pas quelque chose que l'on planifie. Dans les jours qui suivent immédiatement l'acte criminel, de nombreuses victimes ne sont pas prêtes à faire face à des dépenses inattendues, comme le remplacement d'une serrure ou le nettoyage des lieux du crime. Notre Programme d'intervention rapide auprès des victimes verse des fonds d'urgence aux victimes qui en ont le plus besoin.

Of course, our work doesn't end there. The needs in our communities are ever-changing, so this network of supports will continually adapt and evolve. We are now finalizing a pilot program to offer independent legal advice to sexual assault survivors. This program will be of great value to the people who need it the most.

I encourage all members to join me in thinking about the needs of victims in our communities and in recognizing the dedicated individuals who help victims every day, every step of the way. They are role models for all of us.

STUDENT SAFETY

Hon. Liz Sandals: Speaker, I'm proud to have re-introduced the Protecting Students Act, which, if passed would protect our children and students and strengthen public confidence in the Ontario College of Teachers and in the College of Early Childhood Educators.

We know that the vast majority of Ontario's educators do an excellent job supporting our children and students. Everything they do provides our children and students with the opportunity to learn and develop in safe and respectful learning environments.

In those rare circumstances where discipline is required, families, parents, children, students and educators deserve a fair and transparent process that maintains the public interest and protects the well-being of our children.

Together with the Ontario College of Teachers and the College of Early Childhood Educators, we have a shared

interest in maintaining public confidence in the investigation and disciplinary process, and have worked hard to reinforce public trust.

These necessary legislative amendments will support the implementation of recommendations by the honourable Patrick J. LeSage. We are pleased that the Ontario College of Teachers has implemented many of these recommendations already, but in order to fully implement all of them, we need to make legislative changes.

If passed, the Protecting Students Act would improve the Ontario College of Teachers' disciplinary processes, reduce the potential of conflicts of interest and help protect students, children and teachers. Key changes include:

- ensuring a teacher's teaching certificate is automatically revoked if he or she has been found guilty of sexual abuse or acts relating to child pornography;

- requiring employers to inform the college when they have restricted a teacher's duties or dismissed him or her for misconduct;

- allowing the college to share information with the school board or employer if the subject of a complaint poses an immediate risk to a student or child;

- requiring the college to publish all decisions from its discipline committee; and

- improving timelines for the investigation and consideration of complaints.

Those are some of the key changes that the legislation would enforce if passed.

As a government, we strive to maintain the highest levels of accountability and transparency and we expect the same of all organizations that operate in the public interest. Most importantly, parents, children and students expect a public education system that is fair, transparent and accountable, and they need to be able to easily find answers to questions that they may have about disciplinary proceedings and decisions.

Speaker, this is an important step our government is taking to make sure Ontario families continue to have the confidence that their children are safe and protected in their learning environments. I look forward to having every member of this House stand behind and support this very important bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses?

VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF CRIME WEEK

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the PC caucus to respond to Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. The theme of the week is "The Power of our Voices," and it resonates across all aspects of our society. We cannot continue to be silent as offenders seek to assault and silence their victims. We need to speak up and encourage the survivors to believe in the power of their voices.

Crime can affect anyone at any time and we all have a role in preventing crime and assisting victims. Both as

PC critic for women's issues and co-chair of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, we see a society that is too often silent and passive on the deep misogyny that is entrenched in our culture. We need to work together to combat all forms of discrimination, because violent manifestations are rooted in ideas which need to be confronted head-on.

We also owe it to the victims and survivors to protect them from being victimized, and to help them heal. I've called on the government to better support our probation and parole officers, notify crown attorneys when offenders refuse to sign their orders, restore adequate funding to the Partner Assault Response Program, adopt the government's own Domestic Violence Death Review Committee's risk assessment tool to flag high-risk repeat offenders and to pass Bill 130, introduced by the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, which calls for electronic monitoring of sexual or domestic violence offenders when released on parole.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the issue of human trafficking, it being one of the largest growing crimes in Ontario. We know over 90% of the victims are Canadian-born, predominantly girls and averaging the age of 14. They cannot escape without our help.

I have long called for specific services for victims of human trafficking and brought forward legislation that the government could enact immediately to help protect them. It includes increased protection orders, forcing a trafficker to stay away from the survivor for at least three years, and a tort that allows survivors to sue the trafficker for damages and accrued profits.

The cost of doing nothing is immeasurable in terms of the damage to our young women, their families and our communities.

1340

In conclusion, I also want to acknowledge the dedication and efforts of victims' services staff, volunteers, advocates and front-line workers in assisting victims and survivors of crime and their families.

STUDENT SAFETY

Mr. Lorne Coe: I rise in the Legislature this afternoon on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus to speak to the Protecting Students Act in response to the Minister of Education's statement. This bill seeks to amend the Ontario College of Teachers Act and the Early Childhood Educators Act in order to continue to implement the recommendations stemming from the LeSage report, released in 2012.

Speaker, when this bill was first introduced in 2013, our caucus did not feel that it went far enough. At the time, our caucus offered support for the bill as a good first step, though we certainly felt that there were certain elements missing from the bill that needed to be entrenched in legislation.

However, we're pleased to see that this new bill will ensure that a teacher's certificate is automatically revoked if he or she is found guilty of certain forms of sexual abuse or acts relating to child pornography.

Sexual abuse and exploitation of children are unacceptable crimes on one of the most vulnerable populations in our society, and there should be zero tolerance for these types of acts. We have an unequivocal responsibility as a society to protect our children and students. Speaker, there's no place for child exploitation in this province—or any part of society, for that matter—and we expect all individuals, regardless of profession, who engage in this behaviour to be brought to justice.

We will continue to monitor and evaluate the bill as it moves forward through the Legislature—at second reading, into committee and clause-by-clause—and propose amendments where and if we feel this bill can be strengthened.

VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF CRIME WEEK

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the Ontario NDP caucus to respond to the statement from the Attorney General on Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. In the brief time I have available, I want to highlight three specific issues that must be addressed if this government is to adequately respond to the needs of survivors.

The first issue is the impact of the government's modernization process—otherwise known as funding cuts—on victims' services and Partner Assault Response Programs. A recent survey of violence-against-women coordinating committees from across Ontario revealed that almost half of these committees believe the changes will have a negative impact on victims' safety and that they will limit the ability of victims' services organizations to participate in community collaboration. Modernization means fewer services, a greater negative impact on vulnerable community members, and a reduction in public education and coordination activities.

A related concern is the arbitrary reduction in the length of the Partner Assault Response Program from 16 weeks to 12 weeks, an issue I have raised repeatedly in this Legislature. If we don't take action to change the behaviours of abusive partners, we will never be able to keep women safe. Despite the unanimous opposition from community leaders and violence-against-women experts, the changes to PAR were implemented anyway. The government continues to ignore the calls for PAR to be available on a voluntary basis, with differentiated interventions based on level of risk. As a result, several agencies have refused to continue to deliver PAR because of ethical concerns that doing so could put women and children at risk.

The second issue that I want to highlight on this historic day marking our shared commitment to work for true reconciliation is the lack of culturally responsive services for indigenous victims of crime. Indigenous peoples and women, in particular, are disproportionately represented as victims of crime, particularly violent crime. Increased victim support services are an important step toward breaking the cycle of violence. But much

more work needs to be done to provide accessible and culturally relevant services for all indigenous people who have experienced victimization—services that reflect a deep understanding of colonialism, acknowledgement of systemic racism, and awareness of the legacy of residential schools.

The third issue is the government's failure to exclude Criminal Injuries Compensation Board awards and civil damages from the calculation of assets for Ontario Works and ODSP. All Ontarians deserve equal access to justice. This is an issue that the government can address immediately through regulatory changes to the ODSP and Ontario Works acts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further responses?

STUDENT SAFETY

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my honour to rise today, on behalf of Andrea Horwath and the New Democratic caucus, to speak to Bill 200, the Protecting Students Act, 2016.

Ontario is a world leader in providing quality, publicly funded education because of our highly dedicated and professional teachers, as well as families who teach children the value of an education. Similarly, our hard-working early childhood educators help our children succeed and grow as learners in a variety of settings, from child care to primary grades, as well as before- and after-school programs.

Since 1996, the Ontario College of Teachers has had the authority to regulate and govern the teaching profession. Now we also have the College of Early Childhood Educators, which similarly seeks to regulate and govern Ontario's early childhood educators.

Inherent to the mandate of both colleges is their ability to discipline members who violate the public interest and the guidelines of their profession. In the most extreme cases—and I do mean extreme—disciplinary action may include suspension and, ultimately, the loss of a certificate.

Bill 200, the Protecting Students Act, introduced last week, seeks to implement a greater degree of transparency and accountability in the investigation, charge and disciplinary action of members of both professional bodies. In doing this, the legislation seeks to build on former Bill 103 and implement the recommendations of the 2012 LeSage report.

Speaker, these are not matters to take lightly. The bill rightly recognizes that children are vulnerable in our schools, and imposes harsher penalties for professionals who, in very rare instances, take advantage of their vulnerability, specifically through sexual abuse. At the same time, this legislation makes the process of charging and sentencing professionals with misconduct more transparent.

We know that true transparency does not come at the expense of due process. The two principles can, and do, coexist in many professional colleges, and this is a model that we hope this legislation will achieve. New Demo-

crats will also work to ensure that all provisions outlined in this legislation clearly reflect the role of both colleges as regulatory bodies for their professions.

Finally, my New Democrat colleagues and I will work to ensure that transparency is extended both to the public and to professionals within the colleges. I look forward to further review of the legislation at second reading and committee.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their comments.

PETITIONS

AUTOMOTIVE DEALERS

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bill 152, the Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2015 is a vital tool that supports Ontario’s auto sector by cutting red tape for dealers and consumers when a vehicle is purchased or leased; and

“Whereas, in 2011, the province of Ontario conducted a pilot project on in-house vehicle licensing at two new car dealerships that was well received by the participants; and

“Whereas the province of Quebec has permitted automobile dealers to conduct in-house vehicle registrations since 2003, with 700 dealers currently participating;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government of Ontario immediately pass Bill 152 into law, to promote Ontario’s auto retail sector by cutting red tape for motor vehicle dealers and consumers to save them time and money.”

I’ll sign this petition and send it with page Ariane.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: Speaker, as you can see, petitions continue to flood in to my office, and I’m pleased and honoured to read them.

“Don’t Balance the Budget on the Backs of Children with ASD....

“Whereas the government recently announced plans to reform the way autism services are delivered in the province, which leaves children over the age of five with no access to intensive behavioural intervention (IBI); and

“Whereas in 2003, former Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty removed the previous age cap on IBI therapy, stating that Liberals support extending autism treatment beyond the age of six; and

“Whereas applied behaviour analysis (ABA) and intensive behavioural intervention (IBI) are the only recognized evidence-based practices known to treat autism spectrum disorder (ASD); and

“Whereas the combined number of children waiting for ABA and IBI therapies in Ontario is approximately 16,158; and

“Whereas wait-lists for services have become overwhelmingly long due to the chronic underfunding by this Liberal government; and

“Whereas some families are being forced to re-mortgage houses or move to other provinces while other families have no option but to go without essential therapy; and

“Whereas the Premier and her government should not be balancing the budget on the backs of kids with ASD and their families;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government of Ontario to immediately ensure that all children currently on the waiting list for IBI therapy are grandfathered into the new program so they do not become a lost generation.”

I couldn’t agree with this more. I’m going to affix my name to it and give it to page Colleen to bring to the Clerk.

1350

ELDER ABUSE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas today, there are more seniors 65 and over than children under the age of 15, both in Ontario and across Canada;

“Whereas there are currently more than two million seniors aged 65 and over—approximately 15% of the population and this number is expected to double in the next 25 years;

“Whereas Elder Abuse Ontario stated that between 40,000 and 200,000 seniors living in Ontario experienced or are experiencing elder abuse ...

“Whereas Bill 148, if passed, will ensure seniors living in the community have the same protection and support as those seniors living in long-term-care facilities and retirement homes;

“Whereas Bill 148, if passed, will require regulated health professionals to report elder abuse or neglect to the public guardian and trustee office;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly pass Bill 148, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, requiring” regulated “health professionals to report any reasonable suspicion that a senior living in the community is being abused or neglected to the public guardian and trustee office.”

I fully support the petition. I will give my petition to page Emily.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Laurie Scott: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I'll pass it to page Thomas.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have hundreds and thousands of names that come from all over Sudbury and Nickel Belt. I'd like to thank Lynn Doucette from Hanmer in my riding, as well as Dr. Pierre Bonin from Sudbury. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Katelyn to bring it to the Clerk.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of 689 residents who have signed this petition in my riding. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the local ServiceOntario centre located at Westdale Mall in Mississauga provides integral services for local constituents;

"Whereas the ServiceOntario centre located at Westdale Mall has become a hub of activity for the mall, leading to more business for small business owners;

"Whereas the closure of the ServiceOntario centre in Westdale Mall will put tremendous strain on the viability and existence of this small and essential neighbourhood shopping centre;

"Whereas the ServiceOntario centre located at Westdale Mall serves a wide range of individuals—vulnerable seniors, people from different income demographics, some of whom have difficulty travelling and/or affording transportation;

"Whereas large numbers of apartment and condo residents rely on the services provided by this centre and it will cause severe hardships for them;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the government's plan to close the ServiceOntario centre at Westdale Mall in Mississauga and instead look at options for asset utilization for this specific ServiceOntario centre."

I agree with this petition wholeheartedly, I will affix my signature and give it to Julia.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Ms. Laurie Scott: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Off-Road Vehicles Act, RSO 1990, c. O.4 currently says that children under 14 can ride an adult-size ATV (a) on land occupied by the vehicle owner; or (b) under the supervision of an adult ... ; and

"Whereas the manufacturers recommend that no person under the age of 16 operate an adult ATV for safety reasons; and

"Whereas in the province of Nova Scotia, no person under the age of 16 shall operate an off-highway vehicle, except when under the age of 16 and not under the age of 14 if (a) that person is under the direct supervision of that person's parent or guardian and within the sight of that parent or guardian; and (b) both the parent or guardian referred to in clause (a) and person who is under the age of 16 years are certified as having successfully completed off-highway vehicle safety training in accordance with the regulations;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Amend the Off-Road Vehicles Act, RSO 1990 ... to prohibit children under the age of 14 to drive adult-size ATVs on private property and have them restricted to size- and age-appropriate vehicles, and children 14 to 16 require certification to drive adult-size ATVs on private property as in Nova Scotia."

This is signed by many people from my riding. I'll hand this to page Colleen.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas a growing number of Ontarians are concerned about the growth in low-wage, part-time, casual, temporary and insecure employment; and

"Whereas too many workers are not protected by the minimum standards outlined in existing employment and labour laws; and

"Whereas the Ontario government is currently engaging in a public consultation to review and improve employment and labour laws in the province;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement a decent work agenda by making sure that Ontario's labour and employment laws:

"—require all workers be entitled to a starting wage that reflects a uniform, provincial minimum, regardless of a worker's age, job or sector of employment;

"—promote full-time, permanent work with adequate hours for all those who choose it;

"—ensure part-time, temporary, casual and contract workers receive the same pay and benefits as their full-time, permanent counterparts;

"—provide at least seven (7) days of paid sick leave each year;

"—support job security for workers when companies or contracts change ownership;

"—prevent employers from downloading their responsibilities for minimum standards onto temp agencies, subcontractors or workers themselves;

"—extend minimum protections to all workers by eliminating exemptions to the laws;

"—protect workers who stand up for their rights;

"—offer proactive enforcement of laws, supported by adequate public staffing and meaningful penalties for employers who violate the law;

"—make it easier for workers to join unions; and

"—ensure all workers are paid at least \$15 an hour."

I support this petition, affix my name to it and will give it to page Katelyn to take to the table.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to present this petition on behalf of 162 merchants and their dependent families. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the local ServiceOntario located at Westdale Mall in Mississauga provides integral services for local constituents;

"Whereas the ServiceOntario centre located at Westdale Mall has become a hub of activity for the mall, leading to more business for small business owners;

"Whereas the closure of the ServiceOntario centre in Westdale Mall will put tremendous strain on the viability and existence of this small and essential neighbourhood shopping centre;

"Whereas the ServiceOntario centre located at Westdale Mall serves a wide range of individuals—vulnerable seniors, people from different income demographics, some of whom have difficulty travelling and/or affording transportation;

"Whereas large numbers of apartment and condo residents rely on the services provided by this centre and it will cause severe hardships for them;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the government's plan to close this ServiceOntario centre at Westdale Mall in Mississauga and instead look at options for asset utilization for this specific ServiceOntario centre."

I agree with this petition completely and I will affix my signature and give it to page Daniel to take it to you.

1400

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government is proposing to force all Ontarians using natural gas energy for their homes or businesses to switch to more expensive electricity; and

"Whereas for the 76% of homes and businesses in Ontario that heat with natural gas, switching to electricity will increase their home energy bills by more than \$3,000 per year; and

"Whereas the elimination of affordable natural gas will devastate family budgets and destroy the province's natural gas industry; and

"Whereas the plan to ban the use of natural gas in Ontario is just one small part of a radical environmental agenda that is threatening the jobs and financial well-being of hundreds of thousands of Ontario residents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario and Premier Wynne immediately scrap this plan and instead allow Ontario residents and businesses the freedom to use natural gas to meet their heating and energy needs."

I agree with this petition entirely, will affix my signature and send it down with page Huzaifah.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition that reads as follows:

"Whereas a growing number of Ontarians are concerned about the growth in low-wage, part-time, casual, temporary and insecure employment; and

"Whereas too many workers are not protected by the minimum standards outlined in existing employment and labour laws; and

"Whereas the Ontario government is currently engaging in a public consultation to review and improve employment and labour laws in the province;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement a decent work agenda by making sure that Ontario's labour and employment laws:

"—require all workers be paid a uniform, provincial minimum, regardless of a worker's age, job or sector of employment;

"—promote full-time, permanent work with adequate hours for all those who choose it;

“—ensure part-time, temporary, casual and contract workers receive the same pay and benefits as their full-time, permanent counterparts;

“—provide at least seven (7) days of paid sick leave each year;

“—support job security for workers when companies or contracts change ownership;

“—prevent employers from downloading their responsibilities for minimum standards onto temp agencies, subcontractors or workers themselves;

“—extend minimum protections to all workers by eliminating exemptions to the laws;

“—protect workers who stand up for their rights;

“—offer proactive enforcement of laws, supported by adequate public staffing and meaningful penalties for employers who violate the law;

“—make it easier for workers to join unions; and

“—require a \$15 minimum wage for all workers.”

I agree with this petition and I'm going to give it to page Colleen to bring to the Clerk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Unfortunately, that ends the time that we have available this afternoon for petitions.

I recognize the member for Windsor West on a point of order.

FLAT STANLEY

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker. I beg your indulgence as I introduce a guest to the Legislature. I know we're not supposed to hold up props, but if you can just bear with me. I'd like to introduce a new friend of mine, Flat Stanley. Flat Stanley is a school project and a friend of Evan Vanalstine, who's a seven-year-old grade 1 student at Island Lake Public School in Orangeville. For those who aren't familiar with Flat Stanley, Flat Stanley travels to different communities and shares his adventures and information about those communities. I'm proud to have Flat Stanley with me in the Legislature this week, and he looks forward to meeting all the other members.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I think I have to rule that that's not a valid point of order, but we appreciate the information nonetheless.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TREATIES RECOGNITION WEEK ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SEMAINE DE RECONNAISSANCE DES TRAITÉS

Mr. Zimmer moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 207, An Act to proclaim Treaties Recognition Week / Projet de loi 207, Loi proclamant la Semaine de reconnaissance des traités.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I assume the minister would want to lead off the debate?

Hon. David Zimmer: I rise in the Legislature today on Treaty 13 land and the traditional territory of several indigenous nations to announce the introduction of legislation for Treaties Recognition Week in Ontario.

You may recall that about 18 months ago, in November 2014, I made a statement in this House about the treaty relationship and our commitment to working in partnership to establish an annual treaties awareness day. As you can see, following further discussions with indigenous partners, we're going a step further than that with a full week dedicated to the promotion of treaty awareness in Ontario.

A number of other provinces have treaty days, but with all the progress that's been made in recent years to raise awareness of treaties, it became clear to our partners and to us that a day just wasn't enough. Whether it's coming to terms with the legacy of residential schools, violence against indigenous women or the opportunity gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous people, these issues are all related. Understanding these issues and the effort to find solutions starts with a strong understanding of treaties.

I want to get to these issues and some of the steps we've taken in partnership with indigenous leaders and communities to raise awareness of treaties, but first, let me reflect on what we have witnessed earlier today.

First, I want to thank the House leaders of all three parties and the Clerks for working together to make today possible. It is exceedingly rare for us to open the floor of the Legislature like we did. Our focus is rightly on conducting the people's business, whether that be debating legislation or ensuring government accountability through question period. But on very historic occasions, we do open our floor to honoured guests and partners, and people outside this chamber take notice when we do that.

As special as it is when we do that, this morning's events went even further. Elders Dumont and Charles, together with Senator Porter-Brunelle, shared their wisdom with us and helped us get the day started in a good way. And whether it was our Premier or the leaders of the opposition parties, I think we have heard a good balance of reflection on the history that has brought us here today, together with real hope and a renewed sense of purpose as we move forward together on this journey of reconciliation.

Most importantly, Speaker, though, the opportunity to open this floor to indigenous leaders reminds me that in the beginning, we—we—were the guests, not our indigenous colleagues.

It reminded me of one of the first big anniversaries I marked as minister, in 2013: the 250th anniversary of the royal proclamation. The proclamation signed by King George III 250 years ago was a turning point in the recognition and protection of aboriginal rights in Canada, rights that are now fully enshrined in Canada's Constitution. That proclamation formalized the treaty-making process across what is now Canada.

Less than a year after that, we marked the anniversary by joining many indigenous leaders that we see here

today to mark the 250th anniversary, this time of the very first treaty that came out of that process: the Treaty of Niagara.

At the risk of overstating the spirit of the time, one can imagine the atmosphere which produced two fundamental agreements that continue to matter so much to our country today. This was a time before the social media echo chamber, before the never-ending news cycle—dare I say, it was a simpler time. The fact that 24 First Nations and a crown representative were able to agree on the first treaty just a year after the royal proclamation suggests a time when people put far more premium on listening than they do today.

It is my hope, Speaker, that if passed, this legislation would create time and space for the descendants and successors to those early European settlers to listen and learn about the history of treaties and how they continue to influence the world today.

This legislation supports Premier Wynne's statement of commitment and reconciliation made in the Legislature earlier today, and it sustains the government's broader response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action released last year.

It is also part of Ontario's broader treaty strategy to revitalize the treaty relationship in a spirit of respectful coexistence and to enable us to pursue the reconciliation of Ontario's relationship with First Nations through mutually respectful dialogue and action.

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The treaty strategy we launched about two years ago committed this government to promoting public awareness of treaties. It marked a new effort to engage partners in constructive dialogue on treaties and work to improve the socioeconomic outcomes for indigenous peoples in order to make a real difference in their lives. That strategy also underpins our response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, as outlined by the Premier this morning.

Unlocking the legacy of treaties and residential schools will ensure that all Ontarians develop a shared understanding of our joint history. Knowledge about and understanding of the treaties and treaty relationships will help all Ontarians work with indigenous partners to close the gaps in health, education, justice, housing and more.

Speaker, I pose the question: How does a stronger understanding of treaties relate to truth and reconciliation in residential schools? How does it relate to ending violence against indigenous women? Why is an understanding of treaties, their history and their modern-day influence so critical to meeting the challenges in the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples today?

It is important to understand that treaties were signed in a spirit of partnership and in a spirit of mutual respect. It's critical to also understand that within just a few generations, that trust, sadly, was broken. The bond was broken by colonial governments.

It is important to understand how broken promises led to attempted cultural genocide through the residential

school system. It is important to understand how the compounding legacies of broken promises and residential schools created an environment where indigenous women are far more likely than their non-indigenous counterparts to be victims of violence.

Let me say something about our treaty strategy and what we've done. To renew our historic partnerships, we have to have an understanding of our shared history. Ontario is unique in Canada for the number and the variety of treaties, with 46 treaties and land purchases covering most of the province. As I mentioned earlier, a few years ago the government committed to a treaty strategy to generate conversations on treaty relationships and to build greater awareness and understanding of our different perspectives and histories.

To increase awareness and understanding of treaties, we launched the social media campaign #TreatyON, which created a widespread interest on Twitter and Facebook. My ministry also worked with First Nations to revise the Ontario public school curriculum to include information about residential schools and survivors. We distributed a First Nations and treaties map to every school in Ontario—approximately 11,000 copies—to increase awareness of the important role that treaties continue to play in our lives. This is the first treaties map Ontario has published since the 1940s. Now, with the introduction of legislation today to pronounce the first week of November as Treaties Recognition Week, if passed, we would continue to build public awareness about the agreements made by our ancestors to live together on this land.

Central to that effort will be working with indigenous partners to leverage and extend the great work they've done to produce books and kits and videos and posters and maps to raise awareness of treaties across Ontario. We'll work with the Ministry of Education and we'll work with schools and teachers to make sure students and their parents are exposed to all of the great material out there.

One of our newest tools will be the Reconciliation Tree. Donald Chrétien sculpted the tree. It's based on his very beautiful piece of art entitled Tree of Life. The Tree of Life graces the cover of *The Journey Together*, the plan that we released earlier today. If you haven't had a chance to have a look at that document and the art contained within it, and the messages within it, please do.

Ontarians will see the tree at events during aboriginal history month, which starts on Wednesday, and at powwows throughout this summer. Later this summer, we'll help teachers put together their own reconciliation trees with kits that they can obtain online. Ontarians will write their hope for reconciliation on a leaf and attach the leaf to the tree to share with others. You can also share your hopes online with the #ReconciliationTree hashtag.

Let me say something about land claims for a moment. My ministry has also made significant progress on strengthening our relationship by resolving land claims, and in the spirit of reconciliation, we are working to resolve land claims in a very timely manner. The min-

istry has met its public commitment to reach a decision on new land claims within three years of receipt of a completed land claims submission. We've also met our commitment to settle six land claims in four years. Ontario's total number of land claims is 68; eight of them are in research and assessment, 47 are in the negotiation stage and nine are in the settlement agreements that are being implemented.

Since 2003, Ontario has settled 18 land claims and land-related matters, involving the transfer of over 58,000 acres of land to Canada, to in turn be added to First Nation reserves and compensation packages totalling \$121 million.

Since 2003, we have settled land claims at twice the rate as before. In January of this year, Ontario and Chapleau Ojibway First Nation initialled the final agreement for the First Nations treaty land entitlement claim under the terms of Treaty 9.

In March of this year, I signed the settlement agreement for the Chapleau Cree treaty land entitlement claim with the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. This claim involves the transfer of 4,000 hectares of Ontario crown land near Chapleau to be set aside as reserve lands. This settlement agreement is now with Canada, awaiting their signature and execution of the agreement by the federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was also pleased that the federal government and the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point signed an agreement just this month to return Camp Ipperwash, a former military base appropriated in 1942, to the First Nation. I attended that ceremony in Ipperwash with Minister Bennett and First Nations leaders. It was a moving event. It was a long time coming, but the satisfaction that that event brought to the First Nation leadership, to the federal minister and to Ontario was palpable. It should also be noted that an agreement was signed in 2009 to return the land of Ipperwash Provincial Park to the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point.

Ontario has completed a land use, infrastructure and risk report in support of this transfer process, and the final tri-lateral land transfer agreement is undergoing a final review before it is signed off by all parties.

Speaker, as proud as I am of the progress we have made in the ministry in promoting treaty awareness and resolving land claims, progress would be impossible without a strong relationship with indigenous partners. As you may recall, in August 2015 we signed a historic political accord, the first in decades, with First Nation partners including Ontario Regional Chief Day and the First Nations Political Confederacy. All the signatories agreed that this new political accord represents a renewed relationship between the First Nations and Ontario, and it is an important step in the ongoing revitalization of First Nations communities. It is an opportunity to move forward together in a spirit of respectful coexistence and to make a real difference in the lives of indigenous peoples across this province.

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The accord is also important because it recognizes First Nations' inherent right to self-government and commits the parties to joint discussions on common priorities. These common priorities include the treaty relationship, resource benefits and revenue sharing, and various jurisdictional matters involving First Nations and Ontario.

Discussions on jurisdiction and self-government are aimed at building a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities for all parties, and finding practical ways to create real opportunities for First Nations through the strengthening of our partnerships. Ontario's growth depends on renewing the historic partnership we have had with indigenous communities.

The recognition of First Nations' inherent right to self-government, together with the commitment to work together on joint priorities, can already be seen in the efforts of indigenous partners to support treaty awareness and drive change in their communities. For instance, the Walk a Mile Film Project is a joint effort between the city of Thunder Bay and Fort William First Nation to raise awareness of urban indigenous issues in northern Ontario, particularly in the northwest.

The Anishinabek Nation's education materials are putting a unique pressure on the folks at LEGO to produce the unique purple dye that goes into the LEGO wampum belt in the We are All Treaty People kit.

When it comes to making progress on the biggest issues facing indigenous peoples in Ontario, we are relying more and more on the involvement of indigenous partners not only in the design phase of programs, but in the delivery of the programs themselves.

As an example, I was very proud to join Premier Wynne and my colleague Tracy MacCharles in February, when we released *Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women*. It was the culmination of the work not only of ministries across government, but of members of the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women, which included the Ontario Native Women's Association, the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, the Chiefs of Ontario, the Métis Nation of Ontario and Independent First Nations.

Speaker, this new strategy focuses on raising awareness and preventing violence, and providing more effective programs and community services that reflect the priorities of indigenous leaders and communities, as well as improving women's socioeconomic conditions to support healing within indigenous communities.

Central to this strategy is the new Family Well-Being Program. With \$80 million over three years, it will reduce the effects of violence on indigenous families by making community supports available for families in crisis. The program will be designed, developed and delivered by and for First Nation, Métis, Inuit and urban indigenous partners in their own communities.

It will offer supports that respond to the root causes of violence, intergenerational trauma and overrepresentation

of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban indigenous children and youth in the child welfare and youth justice systems. These supports will include more front-line service workers to provide families with increased access to services, community-based programs for children and families who have experienced violence, and more safe places where families can turn when they do face crises.

Unfortunately, many families do not trust police stations, band offices or child protection agencies to provide culturally sensitive and holistic support systems. The program will provide funding for welcoming safe spaces for victims and family members to support prevention and early intervention efforts.

Speaker, here again is an understanding of how that trust was lost with broken promises, combined with a colonial superiority complex that failed indigenous communities. By helping to build capacity, and then turning over as much as possible the design and the delivery of such important services to indigenous partners, we can begin to roll back the harmful effects of generations of colonial policies.

Let me say in conclusion, Speaker, that I have confidence that the initiatives announced today and the work done over the past year will lead us along a good path towards reconciliation. It will help advance the supports needed to build resilient communities, to raise healthy new generations, to make Ontario a place we are all proud to call home. We will lead by example. We will take active steps to devise a model reconciliation system, and we will work on that on a daily basis—day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year.

On that note, I am very pleased that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs will be renamed and become the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. I want to emphasize the word “reconciliation.” This name change more accurately reflects our long-term commitment and ongoing efforts toward reconciliation and dealing with the legacy of residential schools. I am excited that the proposed new Treaties Recognition Week will provide all Ontarians, especially children, with even more opportunities to learn about treaties that have shaped this province. This legislation would mark another important step on the journey we must all take together. The time for lasting change and rebuilding relationships is upon us, and we must seize this opportunity. Meegwetich.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to have the opportunity this afternoon to debate the just-introduced bill number 207 to establish Treaties Recognition Week in Ontario.

I would like to begin by thanking our guests who attended this morning's special session. They included, of course, Elder Jim Dumont and his associate Shelley Charles, who did the opening prayer; Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day; the newly elected president of the Métis Nation of Ontario, Margaret Froh; the president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Natan Obed; the president of

the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, Sheila McMahon; the president of the Ontario Native Women's Association, Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard; and, of course, Andrew Wesley, a survivor of the residential school system; then the closing prayer by Elder Verna Porter-Brunelle, a Métis senator. I would just like to say, before I get started, that they all gave great talks, all different, with some very good messages, and it was a very unique ceremony this morning in the Legislature.

Before that happened, things started a little earlier on this special day. In fact, my alarm clock went off at 4 a.m. so that I could be there for the sunrise ceremony that took part in the park just north of Queen's Park. I didn't think it was such a great idea when the alarm went off at 4 a.m., but I can say that once I got there, I was really pleased to have the opportunity to take part in the ceremony. It was a good way to start this special day out. It started out before the sun was up. It started at 5:30 a.m. There was a smudging ceremony and then tobacco was handed out. A pipe was lit, which was smoked by those who wished to. Water was handed out. People consumed blueberries. There was, of course, some explanation of the significance of all of those steps. It wrapped up with a lot of hugs, so that was more hugs than I've been exposed to in a long time. Anyway, it was a very good way to kick off this special day. This afternoon—it may be going on as this debate happens—there's a blanket exercise being held on the grounds of the Legislature as well, another special ceremony that is going on.

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So it's already been a very special day at the Legislature, with our First Nations, Métis and Inuit partners, especially having them speak on the floor of the Legislature. I certainly believe this underscores the importance of respecting treaties, as well as the established treaty process, as policy is developed into the future.

This bill is a proclamation bill that Treaties Recognition Week would be the first full week in November beginning on Sunday. As the elder Jim Dumont pointed out in his talk in the Legislature this morning, treaties are about relationships, and I think that is very true. Treaties are the root of a government-to-government relationship between the province of Ontario and individual First Nations located within its borders. They are between the government and our First Nations and peoples in the Mushkegowuk, Mohawk, Tuscarora, Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, Delaware, Mississauga, Chippewa, Pottawatomi, Algonquin, Odawa, Anishnawbe, along with our Métis and Inuit peoples.

We, as elected officials, understand the significance of treaties and their importance to the government-to-government relationship between our First Nations peoples, Ontario and the government of Canada.

I would like to take the time before really getting started to say how fortunate I am in the area that I represent, in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, in that I have seven First Nations within the boundaries of Parry Sound–Muskoka: the Wahta Mohawks, in the south-western corner; Moose Deer Point First Nation on the

shores of Georgian Bay; Shawanaga First Nation, just north of Parry Sound; Henvey Inlet First Nation, also on the shores of Georgian Bay; Wasauksing First Nation, just west of Parry Sound; Magnetawan First Nation; Dokis First Nation on the French River; and of course, the Moon River Métis as well. That has been a nice part of my job. It has allowed me to learn a lot by attending various functions at those communities.

Treaties acknowledge and reflect the fact that First Nations were the original peoples of Ontario and Canada, and occupants of the land. These nations were never conquered. The treaties then serve as a pact to live together, coexisting and sharing this land and all that it has to offer. Treaties are a formal bond between the crown and the individual First Nation signatories, based on the principles of trust and mutual respect. They stand to be lasting and meaningful agreements.

Ontario as a province, just as Canada as a nation, was founded on treaties. Treaties are an integral aspect that lay at the core of the relationship between First Nations, provinces and the government of Canada.

As the minister mentioned, with 46 treaties and other land agreements covering Ontario, I feel raising awareness is very important.

I believe that it is significant to note as well that a number of these agreements signed between First Nations and the crown predate both the current boundaries of Ontario as well as the birth of Canada as a nation.

Treaties are pacts. These bonds made between First Nations and the crown are in the spirit of working together for mutual benefit. The specific protection of lands and the preservation of hunting and fishing rights cannot be emphasized enough.

As was mentioned by the minister, the Métis played an important part in the process of facilitating the treaties.

Treaty rights are enshrined in the Canadian Constitution. Section 35 is a reminder to Canadians and a sign to new Canadians of the relationship between the crown and our First Nations.

As I was preparing to speak today, I thought, "What will be the biggest contribution of this bill going forward?" Raising awareness certainly goes hand in hand with education. It is this educational component that will help ensure that our future generations—our young people—are brought up knowing the history and the importance of treaties. This key component cannot be understated.

Education raises awareness at the earliest stages in the classroom about what treaties are, what they represent and why they are important to the fabric of Canada and Ontario. Education in our school systems does not go far enough, however, as many Ontarians would, I'm sure, admit that they could learn more about the history of treaties in the province and their unique qualities. For this to be successful, there needs to be outreach. I believe that the Treaties Awareness Week will address the public awareness component.

The First Nations demographic is the fastest-growing segment of Canada's population, and First Nations youth

are a key component of this. In Ontario, our post-secondary institutions recognize this trend and are stepping up to meet the education component.

The Gichi Kendaasiwin project at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay is a perfect example of this move to embrace the culture of our aboriginal peoples and celebrate the relationship through education. The centrepiece of Lakehead's vision is the Gichi Kendaasiwin Centre, which would serve as a base for community gatherings, a repository of memory, a spiritual place, and a welcoming pathway for all people toward awareness and appreciation of indigenous cultures. I certainly hope that this ambitious project comes to fruition and that projects currently ongoing in other post-secondary institutions continue to integrate indigenous culture into their education experience above and beyond what is already mandated. Mr. Speaker, I don't think that this is a prop, but I've met with Lakehead University, and they've gone over in great detail the plans they have for their project.

While we speak of increasing education on the government-to-government relationship that is to be respected through treaties, wounds from the past still take time to heal. This morning, it was moving to hear the speeches from the floor. To hear from a residential school survivor and to receive the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is yet another step in this process. With the release of the report and its 94 calls to action, I must say that it provides a striking glimpse into a part of our collective history as Ontarians and as Canadians. Again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the chair of the commission, Justice Murray Sinclair, as well as Commissioners Marie Wilson and Wilton Littlechild, along with those who previously served on the commission, as well as those whose immense contributions led us to this day.

As the PC Party leader, Patrick Brown, did earlier, I would especially like to thank and commend the over 6,750 individuals and residential school survivors who provided the collective voice for the report by sharing their own accounts and recalling what must be very difficult memories from the past. Reading through the "The Survivors Speak" component of the report was particularly striking when taking a step back and considering what the individual children must have felt as they were taken from their families, forced into residential schools and made to suppress their culture, language and traditions. The first-person accounts of children and the way their families were changed and torn apart by the enrolment in residential schools is truly tragic.

Of the over 150,000 First Nations children who passed through the Indian residential school system across Canada, the human toll is staggering. One out of every 25 First Nations children who attended residential schools died there and was buried there, oftentimes without their families being notified. Just as the legacy of the residential schools spans generations, so too must the subsequent education of future generations. I'm pleased to see the government including that in the school curriculum.

I also want to note that in 2008, then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper made the historic apology on behalf of

all Canadians in which the federal government recognized that the great harm caused by the Indian residential schools had no place in Canadian society. I'm also proud that Canada is one of the very few countries in the world where treaty rights are enshrined in our Constitution.

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Even with these national strides, it is impossible to read the tragic stories and the first-hand accounts without emotion, knowing that we cannot undo what has been done in the past. The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will help future generations to learn from this element of our collective history and, in time, bring healing and some form of closure, we hope, to the terrible legacy of residential schools.

The report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is another step along the path to promoting reconciliation between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians, and we look forward to continuing the work it will take to bring forgiveness, healing and true reconciliation to all. With healing and learning from the past in mind, the treaty process in Ontario is also evolving.

Mr. Speaker, we have, of course, the Algonquin land claim, which is one that is ongoing. In Ontario, in particular, we are party to the treaty-making process currently as negotiations of the Algonquin land claim continue to move forward. In what would be the first modern-day treaty in Ontario's history, we wait and watch. It is particularly noteworthy that if the process is seen to completion—and it has been going on, I think, over 20 years now—it would be the first treaty signed between a First Nation and the government of Ontario in the 21st century, the bulk of existing treaties being signed in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. When the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs was in estimates committee before constituency week, I asked him and some of his staff questions about progress on this. It looks like it's an ongoing process that is still years to come. There still needs to be agreement from the Algonquins as to the treaty, and there still needs to be more consultation with the general public, as well, that would be affected by the implementation of the treaty.

Treaty Awareness Week, the significance of November 1—I would be remiss not to mention the celebration of our aboriginal veterans and their contribution to our country. On June 21, I'm looking forward to the unveiling of a statue of the great Francis Pegahmagabow in the town of Parry Sound, in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. I'm sure that many here know the story of Francis Pegahmagabow already, but for those who are unfamiliar, he stands as the most highly decorated First Nations soldier in Canadian army history for his service during the First World War. Recorded accounts of his service, including action at the Battles of Ypres, the Somme, the Scarpe and the second Battle of Passchendaele, are remarkable. Serving as a sniper and a fearless messenger, Francis served nearly the entire duration of the First World War despite being wounded on more than one occasion. His awards include the Military Medal with

two bars. Upon returning to Canada at war's end, Pegahmagabow returned to Wasauksing First Nation just west of Parry Sound and served as chief during two separate stints. He also became active in politics at the federal level and, in 1943, was elected Supreme Chief of the Native Independent Government as it was then called. His legacy lives on in Wasauksing and the Parry Sound area, connecting with new generations of First Nations youth, as well as those in the local community.

Francis Pegahmagabow fought for Canada to protect the rights and freedoms of all Canadians and, at home, fought for First Nations representation and rights.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the well-deserved unveiling of that statue in Parry Sound on June 21, National Aboriginal Day.

It has also been my pleasure and many others' in the Legislature to get to know our past Lieutenant Governor, Mr. James Bartleman, who was here for this morning's proceedings. James Bartleman is also from my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. He grew up in Port Carling and is a member of the Chippewas of Mnjikaning.

He served as Lieutenant Governor from 2002 to 2007. Mr. Bartleman also had an impressive international career in Canada's foreign service, with stops in Bangladesh, Cuba, Israel, Belgium, South Africa and Australia. Upon being appointed Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Bartleman chose to focus his efforts on three main goals, all of which have significance to our relationship with our First Nations partners.

The first was reducing the stigma of mental illness. That is obviously very, very appropriate, with recent events, particularly at Attawapiskat, but obviously it's of high, high importance in our First Nations communities around Ontario. Number two was fighting against racism and discrimination, and number three of his priorities was promoting literacy among First Nations children.

When James Bartleman was Lieutenant Governor, I used to enjoy when he would be at events around Parry Sound–Muskoka, and he would always have stories about growing up in Port Carling. In terms of literacy, he talked about how important the library was to him and to his success. But he actually started reading by finding comics at the Port Carling dump. That was his initial reading, and then he made his way to the library.

Back when I was chatting with him after this morning's proceedings, I asked him if he had been to Port Carling recently. He said he had been to the library where he donated a copy of the whole collection of the books that he has authored. So it's still very active.

In 2004, he established the Lieutenant Governor's book program, which took in donated books from across Ontario and had them distributed to on-reserve First Nation libraries, particularly those in the remote and fly-in communities. I'm sure it was the importance of literacy and the challenges he faced that motivated him to do that.

One can appreciate that before the more widespread availability of Internet access, having physical books was the only way to provide opportunities for First Nations

youth with an outlet to explore through reading, and improved literacy levels. This year I received a call from a constituent hoping to donate books for this purpose. He mentioned James Bartleman in this context.

I believe that his legacy in trying to aid First Nations youth will go down as one of his greatest contributions to Ontario. It is truly immeasurable, the number of First Nations youth introduced to the joys of reading and improved literacy who owe that opportunity to the hard work and vision of James Bartleman. I'm proud to know him and proud to have gotten to know him as Lieutenant Governor.

To tie back into treaty awareness week, I would like to say that treaties are something to be celebrated and honoured. In previous years, I was also very pleased to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Royal Proclamation here at the provincial Legislature. While the Royal Proclamation is not a traditional treaty, it served to lay the groundwork for subsequent agreements by recognizing aboriginal rights and setting the guidelines for future treaties between settlers and First Nations.

Also, August 2014 marked the 250th anniversary of the Treaty of Niagara. I believe these anniversaries are also tremendous opportunities to raise awareness and understanding about how treaties have shaped regions of our province and our history.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity as—this being my second time as PC aboriginal critic, a number of years ago when we first appointed an aboriginal critic, I had the pleasure of making a flight up into northern Ontario for the 100th anniversary of the signing of James Bay Treaty 9. That happened in the far northwest, near Mishkeegogamang, or Pickle Lake, at a historic Hudson Bay outpost, a beautiful beach on Lake St. Joseph.

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I also enjoyed that event because, as you know, I like to fly and I was able to fly my own seaplane up there. I still recall flying up there and seeing the weather report; it said it was going to be 36 degrees. I thought, "It must be wrong," but it was a couple of the hottest days I've ever experienced, in the far northwest of northern Ontario. Truly it was an honour to attend that ceremony. Nishnawbe Nation Grand Chief Stan Beardy was there, and James Bartleman was the Lieutenant Governor at the time. It was one of the first events that I was able to take in as aboriginal affairs critic.

I've also, as I mentioned before, had the opportunity in my riding to learn more about Inuit, First Nations and Métis culture by attending events around the riding. I was able to attend a three-hour ceremony with the then Minister of Transportation from the government, who was starting meetings with regard to the four-laning of Highways 400 and 69 through the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. This was a very formal procedure, with some similarities to this morning, with tobacco being presented, a smudging ceremony and prayers, etc.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to mention in the brief time that I have left that one of the other initiatives that has been happening around Queen's Park in the

promotion of awareness of Inuit, First Nation and Métis in the province of Ontario is the renaming of a couple of the committee rooms—I believe it's 228 and 230—into the Gathering Place. There was a ceremony—again, involving smudging and tobacco—to open up those rooms, and they are now decorated with First Nations, Inuit and Métis art. For members here they can, on a daily basis as they attend receptions, get a feel for the culture. Again, at that ceremony there was dancing and smudging etc.

Also here at Queen's Park, on an annual basis I get to attend the Louis Riel Day event that happens here on the grounds of Queen's Park. I've been privileged to participate in that in many different years, most of the time with President Gary Lipinski, who has just retired, and now more recently with the newly elected Margaret Froh.

Of course, the Métis Secretariat Act passed just a month or so ago and I was pleased to have the opportunity to speak to that.

In my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, I try not to miss, if I can, the Moon River Métis annual general meeting, which also includes a fish fry, which I always enjoy having an opportunity to attend.

Also in my time as aboriginal affairs critic, I had the opportunity when John Tory was leader—he wanted to learn more about First Nations—to charter a plane out of Thunder Bay. We flew to the most northerly community in Ontario, being Fort Severn, and met with the chief and council and learned about the community and the challenges they face with schools and many other challenges—housing, schools, water etc. We also flew to Webequie, which is right in the middle of the Ring of Fire, to see a community that at that time had a lot more activity going on. Again, Sam Beardy, who was the Nishnawbe Nation chief, was there to help educate us. That was a very full and interesting day.

More recently, I had the opportunity in Thunder Bay to meet with Nishnawbe Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, who was also here at today's proceedings, with the new leader of our party, Patrick Brown, who was interested in meeting and learning more. I know that, at that meeting, Patrick would also like to visit some of the remote First Nations, which certainly face some of the greatest challenges in the province of Ontario. So I look forward to arranging that sometime in the future. I have also had the opportunity to attend powwows in my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, particularly in the French River area.

In conclusion, I would just like to say that treaties are central to the way of life in our future with individual First Nations, and I look forward to advocating for the recognition of treaty rights, increased education and awareness, and a respectful government-to-government relationship between First Nations and the government of Ontario.

Just as we will continue to celebrate treaties, I look forward to observing Ontario's first treaty awareness week this November, starting on the Sunday, with the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. It's been a

pleasure to have this opportunity to speak to this bill this afternoon. Thank you. Merci. Meegwetich.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I rise, on behalf of New Democrats, to put a few words on the record in regard to the bill that was introduced in the House just now, which we support. Obviously, it's one that the three parties have agreed to. House leaders got together, and we've said that we would allow this bill not only to be introduced today, but actually to get second and third readings, all in the same day. So I just want to start at the beginning by saying that New Democrats are proud to stand and support Bill 207, the Treaties Recognition Week bill.

But I've got to tell you that I want to speak to some of the issues we should really be trying to address in this province. I, like Sarah Campbell and a few other members in this House, represent a large number of First Nation communities. In a lot of those communities, there is very, very weakened infrastructure—I will just put it that way.

If you're looking at housing, here is the picture: Most houses on-reserve probably house 15 to 25 people. You have three-bedroom houses where one family is in one bedroom, another family is in the second bedroom and another family is in the third bedroom. Mom and dad are on a bed in the bedroom. You may have a couple of kids sleeping somewhere on that bed or in a bed beside it. In some cases, I've seen where they've taken the closet out in order to make bunks so you can hotbed kids to sleep, if it's a large family. That's the condition that kids on-reserve in many of our communities have to face.

I ask you the following: How does a kid growing up in a house that's overcrowded, a house where you don't even have your own bedroom where you can go in and study your homework, do well in school? How do we support that child to make sure they are able to fully participate in the education system and are able to get an education that will serve them well in the years to come? It's pretty hard.

When you go into communities across northern Ontario, especially the fly-in remote reserves, a lot of those kids are like every other kid out in Ontario and across Canada. They're wide-eyed and bushy-tailed, want to have all kinds of fun and want to be able to learn and soak in the information. But unfortunately, for many of them, they find themselves three, four, five years behind their counterparts in non-aboriginal communities, because what we put in place after the residential schools was certainly an improvement—don't get me wrong; the residential schools were certainly not the way to go—but what we put in place took away only part of the problem. It didn't really address what we need in our communities to give kids what they need to be able to get a full education. So if you look at the whole experience of what happened in residential schools, it still marks our communities today.

Passing such a bill, I think, is a good thing, recognizing that we have signed treaties in this province with

our First Nations friends on James Bay with Treaty 9; we are signatories to that. But we need to also recognize that there's much that has not been done and much that needs to be done, and we're running out of time. We're leaving far too many people behind who, quite frankly, are giving up on life.

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I represent the community of Attawapiskat. Many of you will know, as you've been reading in the papers recently, that there has been a rash of attempted suicides in that community—and sometimes, unfortunately, people go through with it—for kids who are school age. There are obviously some over school age who are attempting as well, but there are a number of young kids who are attempting, by way of pacts, to unfortunately make that decision. So you've got to ask yourself a question: How does a child in Attawapiskat come to that?

Well, it's complicated and simple. It's complicated in the sense that residential schools and what they have done to the people of the James Bay and other indigenous people across this province and across this country has really wrecked our communities. How do you, as a parent, parent a child when you grew up in an environment where they tried to beat the Indian out of you? They wouldn't allow you to speak your language. In some cases, you were not only physically assaulted, but sexually assaulted. How does a person who has never learned parenting skills become a parent when they become older?

As one of the presenters, one of the chiefs who was here in the Legislature, said this morning—I can't remember who it was; maybe it was one of the elders. But somebody had mentioned this morning, and it struck home to me, that violence is a learned behaviour. I think, in fact, the Premier had said that, which is true. Residential schools, if they did anything other than the horror that people had to go through, instilled a culture of violence that didn't exist before in our aboriginal communities.

I talk to elders across my riding. They talk about how, prior to being into the reserves—because where I come from, most of the reserves were not around until about the 1940s or the 1950s in the way that we can know them today—of course you had people who got mad at each other and stuff, but violence is not a Mushkegowuk thing. It's just not the way they are; that's not the way they're wired. But they learned that in residential schools.

So, by way of residential schools, we not only beat the Indian out of the child that went to school, we not only depressed them, we didn't only beat them, we didn't only attack them, but in many ways, we took away their parenting skills. And that has really affected the ability of communities to function thereafter. We still see the after-effects of that in our communities.

And so what we've done is we've put in place an education system on-reserve that only does part of what needs to be done. It's a federal system—first of all, I will argue the federal government has no capacity to run education—but we've put schools on-reserve and those schools on-reserve are funded at about half the level of

any other school in Ontario. If I'm a kid going to school in Timmins, I get more dollars per pupil than a kid going to school in Attawapiskat, Fort Albany or Peawanuck. How can that be? Are they not children? Are they not equal to children in any other place? In fact, they should have more money, because they're in a more geographically isolated area that costs more to run a school when it comes to heat and staffing and bringing in supplies. But they're funded at less than what the provincial school system offers.

I say we here in this Legislature talk about treaty recognition—of course we'll support Bill 207—but why don't we look at trying to change and break the cycle in education by saying, "Let's engage in a discussion with our indigenous people about how they can opt into a provincial school system, one where they don't abrogate the treaty rights and one that makes sure the federal government doesn't absolve itself of its fiduciary responsibility, but more importantly, an opportunity to enter into their own aboriginal school board, so they can teach their kids in their own language and they can develop the curriculum in such a way that it's sensitive to their culture and language and who they are"?

Je suis francophone. Mon premier langage est le français. L'anglais, je ne l'ai pas appris avant d'avoir six ou sept ans. Pourquoi j'ai appris l'anglais? Je l'ai appris dans la rue. J'ai eu la chance non seulement d'apprendre mon langage sur les genoux de ma mère, mais j'ai continué mon langage à l'école. Donc, je m'identifie aujourd'hui comme francophone.

I'm just saying, for those who didn't understand: My first language is French. I learned French at my mother's knee. As I got older and I went to school, when I was four or five years old I went to school in a French school with other French kids and with French teachers. I consider myself a francophone today; I don't consider myself anything else. I'm a Franco-Ontarian. Because I feel good about who I am, I can compete with anybody in this society. Nobody is any better or any worse than me. Why don't we give that same opportunity to aboriginal kids—our First Nations friends—so that for a child who goes to school in Attawapiskat, if that community chooses to opt into a provincial school board system, that would allow them to be able to be educated in their own language?

Learning mathematics or geography or history—it doesn't have to be taught in English or French. It can be taught in your own language. The only class that you would have to take in English is English. I'm going to be bringing a bill to this Legislature later this week that brings that concept of saying that if the community decides, "I want to opt in to an aboriginal school board of my own making"—and it would be strictly voluntary—the province would then, along with the First Nation, be able to negotiate with the federal government the creation of this board, in such a way that provides that kids are taught in a provincial system that has more money tied to it as compared to the federal system, that respects the fiduciary responsibility of the federal government, that

respects the treaty rights of First Nations and that allows them to develop a curriculum that is sensitive to their own cultural needs and language, etc. I hope that I get some support for that when that bill comes up for debate later on this fall.

My point is: If we're serious about our treaty rights, we have to understand what the treaties were meant to do. Some of you might have known a person who is no longer with us: Stan Louttit. Stan was originally from Fort Albany, if I remember correctly. He was born in Fort Albany but he lived in Moose Factory most of his life. Stan is one of those people, one those many people that I've met over the years, who really got me to understand a few things that I had no idea about, being a guy who grew up in Timmins, Ontario, next to all kinds of friends who were First Nation members. He got me to understand that when their forefathers signed treaties, it was always with an open heart. They would go in and they would sign treaties. They would never be giving up the rights to the land; it was about sharing the land. It was about: "This land that we call the Mushkegowuk territory—the James Bay area—is there for the benefit of all. So in exchange for you to be able to come into our land and to be able to exploit it—rivers, rail, mining, forestry, whatever it might be—in exchange, we'll be able to share in that so that we get some economic benefits. But we will also get an education and a health care system so that our kids can go to school and they can be well taught and our people can be well taken care of when it comes to health care."

Here we are, over 100 years later. We signed the treaty in 1906, I believe. And here we are, over 100 years later, and we're still struggling to deal with some of the same issues that were supposedly agreed to when we signed the treaty.

Let's look at where we are now. We're better than we were. I'm not going to say for one second that things have not gotten better; of course they have. But we have an education system that is still failing our kids. The education system that we have, in my view, could be much improved by finding a way of bringing it into the provincial system and being able to deliver education in a way that's culturally appropriate but also properly supported by the province, which is in the business of education. Here's something that we can do today to respect our treaty rights.

I have here—it's not a prop, Mr. Speaker; it's a document of the government of Ontario. It's the compendium document to Treaty 9. I remember reading this a long, long time ago—the entirety of the document—because Stan Louttit made me read it. Stan said, "You have to read this to properly understand." What this essentially said was: "We, the First Nations people of Moosonee"—or Moose Factory or Attawapiskat or Marten Falls—"sign with the understanding that we'll share the land. You can come in and do these things, but one of the things we're going to get back is an education system."

Here we are today, 2016: We can start working towards that reconciliation. We can say, "Okay, we hear you." Let's try to live up to what the treaty was supposed

to be all about, which is providing good education to the kids on-reserve, making sure that the kids who grow up in Attawapiskat or anywhere else on-reserve in this province are able to get an education that's equal to any other child in this province. We understand that colleges and universities are not going to be established in all of those communities, just like colleges and universities are not established in all of our communities across Ontario. But at the very minimum we should have JK to 12 so that those kids can at least get what's necessary to give them the building blocks and the start that they need for what they're going to do for the rest of their lives. This is one thing alone that we can do when it comes to living up to treaty.

1510

The other thing that the treaty said was that we will provide health care to the people of the Mushkegowuk territory. We have. In fairness, the federal government established a health care system that was okay. It wasn't great, but it was okay. It was run for a number of years, and some years ago we started a process here in Ontario where we transferred the hospital—not the entire health system, but most of the health system was already with the province—over to the province. The problem that we now have is that the structure by which we have transferred it is not functioning. The hospitals act of Ontario demands that you have a hospital board as in every other community. I just want to ring the bell here. Living in Attawapiskat in the James Bay is not the same as living in Timmins or Toronto. Having a hospital board of the same type doesn't work. So the Grand Chief, Chief Solomon, from the Mushkegowuk territory, has been onto the Minister of Health, and I have to say there's some positive response, so hopefully this is going to happen. I've been working with them at a number of meetings and conferences that we've had.

We need to do two things in order to live up to what was demanded in the treaty—providing adequate health care to the citizens who live on-reserve; in my case, the James Bay would be the one. What the Grand Chief is proposing to live up to what's in the treaty is to say, "First of all, let's create our own health planning authority, other than having the LHIN, and allowing us to deliver our own health services to our own people in a way that is culturally, linguistically appropriate to the people that we serve"—recognizing the vast geography between Moose Factory, Ontario, and Peawanuck, Ontario, because we're going from the Moose River through the James Bay into the Hudson Bay. It's a pretty big territory. I get there in my plane and fly, and I can look over the edge of the earth, and it's curved, and I don't see the other place that I'm going to. It's a pretty big area. My point is that what Chief Solomon wants is that we actually put in place a planning authority and a health delivery system that is run, controlled and developed by First Nations with the province—because the province is the experts in the field—and, obviously, funded by the federal and provincial governments as it would be in any other case, but one that actually works for the First Nations people.

Let me give you an example of why this is important. I'm going to get in a little bit of trouble with a few people back in my own riding for saying this. Last winter—or the winter before, I should say—we had a major oil leak underneath the hospital in Attawapiskat. As a result of that oil leak under the Weeneebayko hospital—there's a wing, a very nice building right in Attawapiskat, provincially owned, provincially controlled—the building became contaminated. The biggest complaint that the community had was not with the provincial government. The biggest complaint the community had was that their own hospital administration and board were not responding to them. Nobody was coming to them and saying, "Let's sit down and talk about this. Let's communicate. Let's properly understand what's going on. Let us understand as a hospital what's important to the community, what we need to do." So when this oil spill happened, the first thing that I had to deal with as a member, as I called up chief and council, was, "Gilles, the hospital is not talking to us." Well, there's the problem. The structure is a colonial structure. It's the Ontario hospitals act structure.

What we need to have is a board of chiefs that actually is the board. That's what Chief Solomon and other chiefs want: that when you have a hospital as we do up on the James Bay, it would be the chiefs from each of the communities who are on the board. That's what we used to have with the old Weeneebayko hospital. The idea would be that the chiefs would be at the table. They would be part of the decision-making process about how we administer and run our hospital and our health services on the James Bay. You would have the health authority that's above it to be able to make decisions about funding and about what community supports need to be in place; how do the Weeneebayko health services work with the community health services in Attawapiskat or Payukotayno, which is the child and youth services; and how do all of these organizations work together in a way that is culturally, linguistically and geographically in sync with the realities of the James Bay? That's what the chief is asking for.

In the case of the hospital, as I said, the first couple of meetings that I had up on the James Bay were about bringing the hospital director and others into the community to have discussions with the community so that the community could properly understand what was going on, but more importantly, that the hospital understand what was going on with the community.

I came down here, along with the chief and others, and met with Minister Hoskins. I give him full credit: "Not a problem; we'll do what has to be done to fix it."

It took some time; there's no question. We had problems. At one point we found remains underneath the building. We thought, "Oh boy, is this a burial ground?" It turned out to be an animal that was buried there before the hospital was built.

There were real complications in doing the cleanup because the oil had migrated. Not only that, but there was oil that was there from before they built the building. We've got to wonder who made that decision.

The point is, the government did what it had to do. The hospital has reopened under a resolution by council saying that there are some other things that have to happen that haven't happened yet. Stay tuned. Who knows what's going to happen here?

My point is that if we're serious about treaties, as we should be about Treaty 9—Treaty 9 says that we will provide health services to the James Bay so the people of the James Bay can have a comparable health system to the people outside of the James Bay. Essentially, that's what the treaty says. The only way that I believe that this Bill 207, recognizing Treaties Recognition Week, really can be alive is for us to actually live up to what the treaty is.

Those are just two examples of where the province—and I'm going to give you another one in a second—could live up to our recognition of our responsibility when it comes to treaties with our First Nations brothers and sisters. Let's do something about education. Let's do something about our health system so that we can actually do what the First Nations themselves want and to develop a system that works for them.

In the case of the mental health crisis that we're seeing on the James Bay right now, I want members to think about this: If you lived in, let's say, a community of 1,700 people, you would have more services in that community when it comes to mental health services than you do in Attawapiskat. At Attawapiskat—get ready—you have one mental health worker for about 1,700 people on the reserve. How in heck is one worker going to deal with the needs of 1,700 people? I'm not saying that all 1,700 have mental health issues they need dealt with, but certainly a percentage of them do.

You have the Weeneebayko hospital, which has one mental health worker. That means to say, if you have a crisis when the person is not at work, you're brought into the hospital and you're just dealt with by a regular nurse. If you happen to get sick and have an episode on the weekend when that person is not working, what do you do? A person goes out on a two-week holiday or has to go out because their daughter is giving birth in Timmins, or whatever—you can't run a system that way.

Then you've got Payukotayno, which is our children and youth services. It's like our children's aid society. They're trying really hard, but they're underfunded. They don't have the staff either. Here's Payukotayno, which has two people in Attawapiskat who are supposedly doing mental health work, but when I sit down with the chief and council and I sit down with Weeneebayko, as I did a couple of weeks ago, up at Attawapiskat, nobody had any idea what those people were doing or what their jobs were. They're so busy, the two of them, trying to do whatever they're doing, they don't have a chance to communicate, and there's no real coordination of services between Weeneebayko and Payukotayno and the rest of the community. That's why Grand Chief Solomon wants this change. We need to have a system that allows everybody to know what's going on so that we can work together with whatever resources we have and maximize

the use of those resources so that we have a better chance of catching people when they fall.

I go back to a small community. If I was in Smooth Rock Falls and I was to have an episode and would need mental health services, we have mental health services available in Smooth Rock Falls. We have what's necessary for people to be able to be dealt with and to be able to hopefully get better and to start the process of healing.

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But, if you're in Attawapiskat and you're a 12-year-old kid, you go to a house with 20 or 25 people in it. You live in whatever that gives. Some days it's good; some days it's less good. There's nobody to deal with you. So how do you feel?

I'll say this: We are very, very lucky people, in Ontario and Canada. The Mushkegowuk people are an infinitely proud and very calm people. It is not their way to agitate. It is not their way to do what a lot of others, like in my culture, would do, which is get all excited and God knows what. They're still willing to work with us, after all of that, to be able to try to find a solution.

You have, a-hundred-and-some-odd years after the treaty is signed, the grand chief of the territory saying, "I'm still here. I'm still willing to live up to the terms and conditions of Treaty 9. Hello out there? Ontario, can you come and work with me? Canada, can you come and work with me?" That's all they're asking for. They're asking that the senior levels of government actually work with our First Nations, to be able to do what's right, for us to live up to what was in the treaty.

I just say to my friends here that it's a good thing that we're doing this Bill 207, for the Treaties Recognition Week. Certainly, we're going to support it. I don't want to diminish the importance of that today. But if we're truly serious about us respecting treaties and doing what's right, we have to first remember what we signed in the treaty and that we live up to what we signed in the first place. This is my treaty as much as it is yours, because I'm a signatory to it as well. It's incumbent upon me as a citizen to make sure that I live up to my responsibilities in the treaty. All of us in this Legislature have that same responsibility.

All I know is, as I look to the James Bay, to the people that I represent, they're still there. There's still patience. They're loving people, prepared to work with us despite all of the disappointments over the years. It always amazes me. They're still there.

I want to end on this note. People may take this wrong, but I just want to say it. It's a story that always kind of struck me some years ago. I go flying into Marten Falls. Some of you might know Elijah Moonias. Eli was supposed to pick me up at the airport. I fly my plane in, and as I land on the ground, it's about minus 30 and the wind is blowing. I'm cold as heck and I'm trying to wrap the plane up and plug it in.

Eli finally drives his pickup up to the side of the plane. He looks at me and he says, "Bisson." I say yes. He says, "NDP." I say yes. He says, "Moonias. Communist."

I'd never seen that. You laugh because you've probably heard this story. I was bewildered all that day, going, "I've been dealing with chiefs on the coast for some time. I've never had one self-identify as a communist before." I finally, after a little while, say, "Chief Eli, you have to tell me what this is all about."

He sits down and he says, "Well, when I was seven years old, a plane came into my community, landed on the river, and they snatched me. They took me off to a residential school. For two years, I never came back home. They wouldn't let me come back.

"Finally, after about two years, they flew me back into the community. When I got there, you have to remember, the community back then was not what it is now. We didn't have wooden floors. Many of us lived in tents, because we were still living on the land in the winter, so in the summer we would pitch our tent where the community is. When I showed up at the community, they boarded me at the priest's house."

The priest had a regular house like anybody else would have. Eli says to the priest, "Where's my mom and dad?" The priest says, "Oh, you have to go down there, around the corner, around the stump, over the creek and you're going to find your mama living over there."

So little Eli goes down there to find his parents and gets there. His parents are still out in the bush, but his grandma is there. So he meets his grandmother and he's all excited and spends some quality time with his grandmother that afternoon.

He goes back to the priest's house and they're having supper. He says, "Father, I have a question." He says, "What's that?"

He says, "How come, when I go visit my grandmother, she lives in a place with dirt floors, she brings water in in a bucket, she brings her waste out in a bucket. I look in this, and you've got a wooden floor, you've got water that comes out of the tap, you've got heat that comes out of a switch. Why is it that you live like this and my grandmother lives like that?" And he says, "Shut up. You're being a communist."

So he says, "Since that day, I consider myself a communist."

But the point, I think, is made. The experience Eli had is the experience of many, which was that it wasn't only that the residential school marked you, for the experience that you had, but it's also what happened as far as the makeup of the community itself, and to what point it was institutionalized both within the church and within the government in the delivery of those services.

As we move towards the passing of Bill 207, I'd just ask members, let's live up to what we signed in our treaties. Let's do what we said we would do over a hundred years ago and provide our aboriginal friends with the services they so desire and so much deserve, as we all do across this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Zimmer has moved second reading of Bill 207, An Act to proclaim Treaties Recognition Week. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

TREATIES RECOGNITION WEEK ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SEMAINE DE RECONNAISSANCE DES TRAITÉS

Mr. Dhillon, on behalf of Mr. Zimmer, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 207, An Act to proclaim Treaties Recognition Week / Projet de loi 207, Loi proclamant la Semaine de reconnaissance des traités.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Dhillon has moved third reading of Bill 207, An Act to proclaim Treaties Recognition Week. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

TIME ALLOCATION

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Speaker—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: A point of order—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: You don't ask me. You ask him.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's what I'm asking. Can you send us a copy?

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just so I get a copy.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It's in the order paper, Speaker, the copy of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): All right. I recognize the government House leader to move the motion.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that, notwithstanding any standing order or special order of the House, the following arrangements be made with respect to Bill 201, An Act to amend the Election Finances Act and the Taxation Act, 2007:

That the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Monday, June 6, 2016, for the purpose of hearing from the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario, who will be invited to make a presentation of up to two hours, followed by discussion with the officer moderated by the Chair; and

That the committee be authorized to meet from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesday, June 7, 2016, for the purpose of hearing from the leader of the Green Party of Ontario, who will be invited to make a presentation of up to one hour followed by discussion with the leader moderated by the Chair; and

That the committee be authorized to meet from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, June 8, 2016, for the purpose of

hearing from a witness chosen by the official opposition House leader, who will be invited to make a presentation of up to one hour followed by discussion with the witness moderated by the Chair; and

That the committee be authorized to meet from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday, June 9, 2016, for the purpose of hearing from a witness chosen by the third party House leader, who will be invited to make a presentation of up to one hour, followed by discussion with the witness moderated by the Chair; and

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That the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, June 7, and Wednesday, June 8, 2016, for the purpose of public hearings; and

That the deadline to request to appear on these dates be 12 noon, Thursday, June 2, 2016; and

That witnesses be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis; and

That all witnesses receive 10 minutes for presentation and 15 minutes of questioning by committee members; and

That the Chief Electoral Officer or his designate be invited to attend committee hearings as an adviser authorized to answer questions posed by members and provide feedback on presentations; and

That the committee be authorized to meet for one week in June, two weeks in July and one week in August for the purpose of public hearings; and

That the committee be authorized to meet from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesday, June 1, 2016, for the purpose of organizing hearings during the summer adjournment; and

That the deadline for written submissions be 1 p.m. on Monday, August 15, 2016; and

That the deadline for filing amendments with the Clerk of the Committee following public hearings be 4 p.m. on Monday, August 22, 2016; and

That the committee be authorized to meet in Toronto from Monday, August 29, to Thursday, September 1, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That at 4 p.m. on Thursday, September 1, 2016, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, September 12, 2016. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on General Government, the Speaker shall put the

question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for second reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion number 74.

Does the minister wish to lead off the debate?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I will, Speaker. Thank you very much for recognizing me to speak on this important motion, government motion number 74, which relates to Bill 201—I believe that is the number of the bill—An Act to amend the Election Finances Act and the Taxation Act, 2007.

Speaker, as you know, the government has tabled this very important bill in the House, dealing with modernizing election finances rules in the province of Ontario. But we've done something more than just introduce the bill. We have worked very closely with the opposition parties—particularly the official opposition and the Green Party of Ontario—to ensure that there is sufficient input from opposition parties in the drafting of the bill and making sure that it captures all the main elements as they relate to the modernizing of election finances rules in the province of Ontario.

But most importantly, Speaker, the government is very much interested in hearing from the people of Ontario when it comes to this draft legislation, so that it could be further improved and strengthened to ensure that we have accountability and transparency when it comes to election financing in our province.

Therefore, one of the most unprecedented things we have done, or something that has been used rarely, is to send this bill to the Standing Committee on General Government right after first reading. As the Speaker would know, usually a bill gets tabled at first reading, and then second reading debate commences for a good, at least, 10 hours or so in this House before it is referred for public consultation and clause-by-clause.

In this particular instance, the government has chosen—and I believe and hope there will be support from the opposition parties and from all members—to forward this bill right after first reading, to make sure that we take the time during the summer and consult Ontarians in a robust manner, with the view of further improving this draft legislation.

That is very much in essence what this motion captures. And I'll go through some of the specifics with you, Speaker, as to what this motion does.

First of all, it starts the committee process at the Standing Committee on General Government right on June 6, which is next week. What the motion is asking, as a first step, is that the Chief Electoral Officer be invited to present to the committee on this bill and, of course, make himself available to members of the committee to engage in the discussion around this bill and modernizing of the role of election financing.

The second thing it asks for is that, on the following day, the leader of the Green Party of Ontario be invited to

come and speak to the committee and present on this important bill, with, of course, an opportunity for all committee members to engage in the discussion with him.

Then the motion goes on to ask the opposition parties to invite an independent expert witness, one for each party, to come and present to the committee—again, an opportunity to start having a constructive dialogue with committee members on the merit and the substance of the bill, and of course an opportunity to better understand and learn best practices when it comes to election transparency, which will strengthen transparency and accountability. That's why one of the things that we are suggesting in this bill is to give an opportunity to both opposition parties to independently call an expert witness.

Further, the next week, it also asks for the committee to sit in the evening hours from 6:45 p.m. till about 9 p.m. so that we can start engaging Ontarians and create an opportunity for Ontarians, who work very hard during the typical 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. time frame, to come to the Legislature in the evening to be able to present on the bill. Of course, our aim is to get as many Ontarians as possible to come and make the committee process more accessible for Ontarians. That is why this motion is asking to create an opportunity for the committee to sit in the evening hours so that Ontarians are able to participate in this very important process.

The motion goes on and also requires that it work through the summer months. The motion requires four weeks of sitting during the summer months, with the view of an opportunity for the committee to travel across the province. Again, our hope and expectation is that the committee members, working in a constructive fashion, will be able to travel the breadth and scope of our great province and find opportunities to invite Ontarians to come and present their point of view on this very important matter.

This bill, of course, is all about further strengthening democracy in the province of Ontario. We want to make sure that, during the summer months, there is ample opportunity for Ontarians to come forward—and not just Ontarians, but other legal experts as well. So this bill creates that platform, creates that opportunity for the committee to be able to work through the summer months—up to four weeks—to travel across the province, and to put an invitation out to Ontarians for them to come forward and speak to this very important bill, to give their point of view and perspective to further strengthen this bill.

Lastly, in terms of timelines associated, what this bill is also suggesting is for the committee to do clause-by-clause towards the end of August and early September, with the view of ensuring that all the work that has been done, all the information that has been collected from Ontarians and legal experts, can then be translated, if I could use that expression, into amendments to the bill, into additions to the bill in a clause-by-clause manner, so that that bill can be referred back to this House for second reading debate when we come back again from our summer recess, and that is post Labour Day.

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The whole notion, during the summer months, is to ensure that the committee gets ample time to work, to travel, to listen to Ontarians, to make changes to the bill and report it back to the House in September, so that we can then go on with the work on second reading debate, as is the norm in this place, go back to public consultation for committee process after second reading, as stipulated in the standing order rules, and then after that work, report the legislation back for third reading debate. Our hope and expectation is that we can have this bill passed before the end of the year so that this legislation can come into place starting January 1, 2017—of course, that being premised on the bill passing through this Legislature.

Again, the hope is that by getting the bill passed and by coming into effect on January 1, 2017, it lets everyone, all political parties in the province of Ontario—not just the ones who are sitting in this Legislature—and all other individuals, candidates, independent they may be, know the new rules and transition into the new rules far in advance of the next election, which will take place in 2018. That's why we want to create ample opportunity for this bill to have public consultation, and that's why we have proposed this motion that will allow for us to work through the summer after first reading, then second reading in the fall, then second reading committee process—so committee process times two in essence—and then third reading debate and passage of the bill. I think that's important because this bill deserves that kind of public scrutiny and public input. As I said, this is about modernizing public financing, election financing, and ensuring that we further strengthen transparency and accountability in the work we do.

Now, I still feel very strongly that this is the right process to take, Speaker, because as legislators—and we have had this debate in this House around this bill—it is important that we do this work. That is exactly why we have been elected: to take on difficult issues that come up, to be able to work together collectively, to solicit ideas and use the legislative mechanisms to bring Ontarians into the process, solicit their feedback and work collectively, in a collaborative manner, because that's what people out there expect us to do, and develop solutions together. That is exactly what we have outlined: a very robust consultative process within the framework of our standing order rules, within the legislative process, making sure that legislators are able to participate in that important conversation, are able to listen to Ontarians, solicit their ideas and make this draft bill even stronger.

Speaker, one of the other things that is proposed in this motion is the role of the Chief Electoral Officer. I think I mentioned to you earlier that one of the first things that we're asking to do in this motion is to ask the Chief Electoral Officer to be the first presenter. But in my conversations with the opposition parties, and particularly the official opposition, an idea was brought forward that we have the Chief Electoral Officer be part of the committee and their work, as an adviser. I thought that that was a very good idea, because he does bring a

very unique expertise. As the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario, he obviously has much knowledge and expertise of rules in other jurisdictions, like the federal government, upon which a lot of this bill is modelled. Therefore, Speaker, the motion also asks that the Chief Electoral Officer be able to attend all committee hearings as an adviser to the committee, so that we as committee members are able to use his expertise or his designate's expertise on this bill.

I do want to thank the official opposition and the House leader of the official opposition for this suggestion. I'm happy that we were able to incorporate that within this process.

I think there is pretty much a broad consensus across all party lines that we need to strengthen and modernize Ontario's financing rules, and I'm glad that the government is moving forward with that. I think there's a lot of opportunity, as I've stated earlier, for all of us to work together.

I also very strongly believe that this is really not a partisan issue. This is an issue around strengthening our democracy, and it is in the best interests of all members of the Legislature and everybody who is engaged in a democratic process—we hope that every Ontarian is—to participate in this process. Therefore, Speaker, my plea will go out to all members and all parties to please engage in a substantive conversation around this legislation. I think it's important that we set up a framework for the future that further instills confidence in a democracy from the people.

One of the strengths we have as a province and as a country is our democratic system, the fairness around our democratic system. It's the opportunity for parties and individuals to engage in a healthy debate around issues that are most important to our constituents. That's what makes our democracy so strong.

I often say that it is the multiplicity of ideas—the clash of ideas—that makes us and our democracy so strong, because it allows for an environment where different ideas can come together. Then the people get to decide, at the end of the day, which idea or ideas they like the most. It's very much a system that is based on merit, and every four years the people of Ontario, in the case of our province, get to make that determination.

We know that people in many other parts of the world would love to emulate our system, where that kind of deep debate and discourse in a respectful manner takes place without any violence whatsoever.

Many have heard my personal experience. As many know in this House—and I have spoken about it in the past—I was born in another part of the world and in my early childhood was living under a military regime, where my father was involved in a pro-democracy movement and spent nine months as a political prisoner. His offence was that he led a march, a protest asking for the right to vote, point finale. I still have a copy of his charge sheet from the military court. He was under the martial law ordinance at that time. That's what he was accused of, that he was inciting people—imagine this: You're provoking people to have a right to vote. That was his

crime. I'm very proud of my father for committing that crime, because that's a crime that defines the essence of our society.

One of the most incredible things my parents did, in my view—they sacrificed a lot during that period; I was 10 years old at that time—was to come to this country, where it's not a criminal offence to be a member of a political party, it is not a criminal offence to have a right to vote and go every four years and cast that ballot, and it is not a criminal offence to be part of a Legislature where we can get engage in healthy dialogue and debate.

That's the kind of society we're building. That's the kind of democracy we need to continue to further strengthen. It is incumbent upon us as legislators—nobody else, Speaker. It is very much incumbent upon us as legislators to champion that, to work on this type of legislation to further strengthen democracy.

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We need to trust ourselves that we can do so in a manner that is non-partisan, that is in the best interests of Ontarians, the people we represent, people who have the right to vote or who may not have the right to vote, like the pages in our chamber, who are just not old enough to vote, or new Canadians, who are not yet Canadian citizens and have not earned the right to vote.

It is our responsibility, as you know very well, to represent every single voice. By not engaging in that dialogue and that conversation, and by not taking on difficult issues like this particular bill, I think we will be abdicating our responsibility.

Speaker, I'm personally very comfortable, from every core of my being, that this is the right process that we are taking. We have tried to work very hard with all political parties to get their input and their advice in this matter. To that, Speaker, I will say that even until the last minute, we received advice from the third party as well, as to how we can improve upon this motion, and I have accepted some of that advice.

In closing, I'm going to move an amendment to my own motion that I have received from the third party, and it's something that we agree on.

Speaker, at this time, I move that the clause, "That the committee be authorized to meet for one week in June, two weeks in July and one week in August, for the purpose of public hearings; and" be struck out and replaced with:

"That the committee be authorized to meet for up to four weeks during the summer adjournment for the purpose of public hearings; and

"That one staff person from each recognized party be authorized to travel with the committee; and"

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Naqvi has moved that the clause "That the committee be authorized to meet for one week in June, two weeks in July and one week in August, for the purpose of public hearings; and" be struck out and replaced with:

"That the committee be authorized to meet for up to four weeks during the summer adjournment for the purpose of public hearings; and

“That one staff person from each recognized party be authorized to travel with the committee; and”

Further debate? I can recognize the government House leader to speak to this motion.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm not going to take too long except to say that this amendment to the original motion is based on the advice that I've received from the House leader of the third party in particular, but it's a sentiment that I heard from members from the official opposition as well.

As I said, we've been working in a spirit of co-operation and want to make sure that there is latitude and flexibility available to the members of the committee to be able to do their work in a collaborative and co-operative fashion. Therefore, I have moved this amendment in that spirit, and I hope it will be acceptable to all the members of this Legislature, and particularly the government notice of motion 74 as an amendment.

Once again, thank you very much for indulging me and giving me the opportunity to speak on this important motion. I'm sure there will be many more opportunities for myself and other members to speak on the bill as well, when it will come up for second reading debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd just like to clarify that I'm going to be sharing my time with my colleague and friend from Nipissing, Vic Fedeli.

It's a pleasure to stand today and speak about Bill 201, An Act to amend the Election Finances Act and the Taxation Act, 2007.

Speaker, thank you very much for acknowledging me to speak on this motion. The reason we are debating this motion is that this Liberal government has got itself into a serious pickle over political fundraising. From big-ticket fundraising to fundraising quotas, this Liberal government and this Premier have used this and abused the rules around political fundraising unlike anything that we have ever seen before. They've clearly decided they've padded their bank accounts enough, so now it's time to change the rules.

I find it interesting that just back in October 2015, I tabled a private member's bill on third-party advertising in this House. The Premier and her entire caucus, in fact, voted unanimously against my PMB. Yet, today, they're keen to steamroll and move this reform forward. It's interesting what happens when the media gets involved and the public starts to challenge them on things that are actually seen to be self-serving. All of a sudden, they have now found religion on electoral reform and financing.

When I tabled my bill, it was about fairness. It was about anyone being able to step out and run for a position, a privileged position like this, and actually play with a set of fair playing rules so that anybody, regardless of their stake in life, could step up and say, “I want to be a member of provincial Parliament.” That was the essence of why I tabled my bill. As well, the Chief Electoral Officer has twice—in the last two reports he has tabled—suggested that there needs to be significant

reform. And yet, again, the government did nothing of their own volition. They certainly didn't do it.

My colleagues, both Rick Nicholls from Chatham-Kent-Essex and the member from Fergus-Elora—your riding, Mr. Speaker. You tabled it as well. They voted against both of those. So three times they had the ability, just in the short term, to actually change this. Now, all of a sudden, because they got caught with their hand in the cookie jar, they've decided that they need to do this.

I find it interesting that the government House leader—and I have a lot of respect for the government House leader—is suggesting open debate and that he wants to strengthen democracy, and yet most of what has been written so far was done behind closed doors. It wasn't open to ourselves and the third party, necessarily, to actually—the Premier came with it on the back of a napkin. I'm actually going to give her credit that she did it on the weekend. That's wonderful. Some people went the other way. I think it's great. We all work all weekend. We work seven days a week. But it was on the back of a napkin. It wasn't open dialogue. It wasn't open debate to create a document that we all had the ability to have fair input on. She came and said, “Here's what I believe, and you're going to like it.”

Despite a promise to fix it, there remain no restrictions on cash-for-access ministerial fundraising. The proposed legislation does not address changes to the rules for lobbyists or political staff, or the many loopholes to third-party special interest advertising. I just want to remind those people listening and those in the House today that third-party advertising in the last election spent \$8.6 million—way more than the three parties combined. That, to me, is just fundamentally wrong. When a group that is not duly elected can actually have that much influence on an election, we've lost our way somewhere. That was the whole intent of my private member's bill: to bring fairness and equity back to individuals who want to step up to this very, very distinguished—I believe—career.

Their legislation, as I've said before, was crafted behind closed doors. Frankly, that's offensive. The government House leader—and I hadn't heard this story before—spoke about his father being a political prisoner and wanted to speak of participation in democracy. And yet, again, his Premier crafted this behind closed doors. She crafted what she wanted to happen for their benefit—

Interjection: Self-serving.

Mr. Bill Walker: —self-serving benefit, as opposed to having open and frank dialogue. We suggested that it should be an all-party group that actually gets together and creates the basics so that everyone could be playing from the same ground rules. To me, Mr. Speaker, this is fundamental democracy. Again—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: It's like banning natural gas.

Mr. Bill Walker: Banning natural gas: exactly. Where did that come from? It certainly wasn't from this side of the House; I can assure you of that.

The government House leader, as well, said that the core of his being believes in the process they are following. It seems counter to participatory democracy

and the ability for all people to have a say when, again, they're controlling how we write the rules and where the rules are written. Yes, they're trying to say that we're going to have some public debate, but if I go back to the budgetary process, again, they had debates all over the province. It was wonderful, except they didn't even let it get to the committee to actually explore all of the input that was given by the great people of Ontario before they tabled their budget. So I am a little bit cynical when they tell me that it's going to be open and participatory. It will be open and participatory as long as they control all of the details and all of the access to that.

It brings me to the point—before I finish this thought process—that there's also talk of them wanting to change the election process overall. They think that they want to move forward. Similar to the federal Liberals, they want to get rid of first-past-the-post, and frankly, it worries me. It worries me because if they're not going to debate it openly with input from all parties involved, then that is not democracy. They have to do it with a vote by every single voter who is eligible. That is open and participatory democracy. We've called that, if any of those changes happen, it has to be done through a referendum so that every single person out there has the ability to have their say. Electoral reform belongs to the voter, not to one party, not to one group, not to special interest groups, but to all people, to have their individual say.

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Recent revelations show that the government held over 90 cash-for-access fundraisers in two years, which in turn shows that the Wynne Liberals may have turned doing government business into a money-making machine for the Ontario Liberal Party. Recent revelations also show that Ontario's electricity users, who are paying the highest prices for electricity in their lifetime, are at the losing end of this political machination.

This is why we in the PC Party have called and continue to call for a public inquiry. I've had hundreds of constituents in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and Ontarians from all corners of this province support this call by signing our petition in support of an inquiry. Clearly, this government continues to lose the trust of the people of Ontario.

I'm going to read comments from some of them. It's important that this be on the record. It's not just us as the opposition; it's not just us doing our job to hold the government accountable, which is truly what we're sent here to do when we're on this side of the House. This is from people, general Ontarians, who have explained this to us.

"The Wynne Liberal government has to be the most corrupt/incompetent Ontario government we have experienced since Confederation"—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to have to ask the member to withdraw his unparliamentary remark.

Mr. Bill Walker: Withdraw, Mr. Speaker. It was a quote, so I do apologize, but I was just using the words that they actually shared with me. I will withdraw.

"For example:

"(1.0) Cancelled gas-fired power plants and associated payoffs to the energy developers without legal basis;

"(2.0) Ornge mismanagement and failure to take corrective action;

"(3.0) Failure with SAMS program for welfare payments despite early warnings of significant problems.

"We will never learn of the full incompetence and financial damage of the Wynne government until they are stripped of power. When the full damage is learned Kathleen Wynne should be charged with defrauding the public purse and breach of trust"—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It's unacceptable language; you have to withdraw that as well.

Mr. Bill Walker: Withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): If you continue with unparliamentary language in your quoting of this document, I'm going to have to move on.

Mr. Bill Walker: Just reading a quote, Mr. Speaker, but I do withdraw. I agree.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Okay, but if you continue to read unparliamentary language, I'm going to have to move on.

Mr. Bill Walker: The end of the quote was, "Just my opinion." Jim McEwen.

"This government ... as the previously Liberal government run by Dalton McGuinty," is doing things that they do not believe are acceptable. "This is not okay, and someone must make this party accountable for every taxpayer dollar they spend. Thank you for your time." The Lantz family.

Another quote: "Let me begin by expressing my disgust. The thought of (two) more years of Liberal rule is profoundly depressing. This has to stop. Now." Ms. Steele.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Ontario don't trust the Wynne Liberals to have their backs. I say that the fact alone that Bill 201 was spawned by the same Wynne Liberal brain trust is cause for major concern. Why was this government so keen to draft their so-called reform bill behind closed doors? As I said earlier, they've had three opportunities, with two of my colleagues and myself in the House bringing legislation forward, where they could have corrected this. They could have actually voluntarily done this. We even did it with support and knowledge given by the Chief Electoral Officer. Yet they voted unanimously against all three of those private members' bills. Is it because they wanted to control the process so they could control the outcome, ensuring the new system only benefits themselves? Is it so they can continue to ignore our calls for a public inquiry? Ontarians who are signing our petition believe that it's only through an investigation into the past conduct of the Liberal government and the Ontario Liberal Party that we can ensure we clean up political financing in Ontario.

Getting public inquiries is not easy. They cost money. Justice, fairness and preserving our people's rights can cost money; we acknowledge that. But that's democracy. That's why we have the privilege and the right to live in

Ontario, in Canada. To us, doing nothing, which is to not inquire in an open and transparent way, can cost us much, much more.

The inquiry we need is to be about the cozy relationship between this government's fundraisers and renewable energy companies. The Ontario Liberal Party has received and benefited from over \$1.3 million it received from 30 renewable energy companies. In turn, these same companies have received and benefited from millions of dollars of government contracts for wind turbines and solar power.

At the losing end of this cozy relationship are Ontarians who, as a result of the failed energy policies of this government, are paying the highest rates in North America. Nothing has been more damaging to household budgets and to our economy than the province's current electricity rates. To us on this side of the House, this is offensive. Frankly, it's wrong. It's this sort of thing that demands an inquiry.

Ontario ratepayers deserve to know exactly why their hydro bills are so high. Although I can't speak for them, I wonder if the backbenchers on the opposite side of the House understand why it's important they stand up for the people. Hiding the process behind closed doors shows contempt for democracy, for our Parliament and for our parliamentary process. Most importantly, it shows contempt for the people that we're given the privilege to represent here every day.

Is there any file the Liberal government has managed worse than the energy portfolio? I don't expect you to answer that, Mr. Speaker, but I think I might know, if you joined us back out here, what your answer might be. Evidence of the Liberal scandal, mismanagement and waste continues to pile up.

Our finance critic and Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli revealed 10 days ago, in his Focus on Finance, that the Liberal government could have gotten itself out of the multi-billion-dollar Samsung deal and saved ratepayers \$5.2 billion. That's with a "B." Every day I have people come through my constituency office—they e-mail me, call me, as all of our colleagues in here do—asking for funding for things like autism, physiotherapy, for seniors who need care and services and they're not getting that. There's \$5.2 billion that was on the table that this government had a choice they could have made, and that \$5.2 billion would then have been here to help those on the front lines of health care, education and all of our safety and community social services that are going without.

This Liberal government would like you to believe there's nothing it can do or could have done to mitigate skyrocketing hydro costs in Ontario, but that is simply not true. I know my colleague Mr. Fedeli will have a lot to say about this during his debate. He's going to take the other half of this time and I'm looking forward to the details that he brings. He always does a great job of making sure he has the facts, he takes his time and, most importantly, what he does is he listens to the people of his constituency but also the people across all of Ontario.

When he brings documents such as his Fedeli Focus on Finance, you know that he has done his homework.

You know that he has gone out and done the research. The people of Ontario respect and appreciate him because he does such a great job of putting the facts in front of people and letting them make their own decisions. It's pretty easy, because at the end of the day, there are a lot of facts that he brings to the table that can't be refuted by this government.

Like everything this Liberal government does, the Liberals put their own political interests over the best interests of Ontarians. It's no wonder Ontario ratepayers pay among the highest and fastest-rising energy rates in North America—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order. The member from Ottawa—Orléans.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, I was actually just trying to understand the relevance of the current member on our motion in trying to identify where exactly we are going with this debate today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Yes, I'll remind the member that it's not a bill, it's a motion, and that we will stay within the guidelines of the motion. If you wander, I'll alert you to that.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I'll always try to stay within the guidelines, especially when you're in the chair.

What I'm trying to do is make sure that people understand when they're bringing in a motion like this but are actually doing the bulk of it behind closed doors. I need people in Ontario to understand and provide a bit of context of some of the other things that have happened behind closed doors under the regime of this government, and look at the impact. People, every day of our lives, come in and talk to us about the exorbitant hydro rates that they are having to pay, people who can't afford to make their energy bills because of behind-the-closed-doors actions of this Liberal government.

I'm just trying to paint the picture and put some facts to show that there's a trend here and that we're worried very much that this actual motion will be done in the same way, that it will be done behind closed doors with only one party really controlling what they want to happen.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: Now they're putting closure on it.

Mr. Bill Walker: We certainly don't want any time allocation, but at the end of the day, they are rushing this one through.

As I alluded to in my earlier remarks, I had a private member's bill just back in October 2015 in this very House, and every single member of the Liberal Party voted against that. They knew what was going on. They knew the Chief Electoral Officer told them in two reports that it needed to be reformed, and yet they didn't and they want to write the rules behind closed doors. It's no wonder Ontario ratepayers are paying among the highest rates because of these decisions. As I was saying earlier, life under this the Liberal government continues to get worse.

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Mr. Speaker, I have some suggestions about financing reform. As I said, the news that the government held over 90 cash-for-access fundraisers in two years only increases the perception that the Wynne Liberals may have turned doing government business into a money-making machine for the Ontario Liberal Party. I think it will be delightful to hear from the Chief Electoral Officer during hearings on Bill 201.

I've had a number of conversations—as I say, my colleague from Wellington–Halton Hills, back in 2011, brought a piece of legislation that would have helped to reform at that time. My colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex brought it in 2014, and I brought a bill in 2015, just in October of last year, to talk about a lot of this stuff. Each time, it was voted down—unanimously, by the way—by members of the Liberal Party. So it's interesting. The Chief Electoral Officer brought two reports suggesting major reform was needed, and yet, unanimously, they voted against those three.

So I'm finding it very hard, despite trying to give them credit, why all of a sudden there's a rush, why all of a sudden they want to speed this through the summertime. As I alluded to earlier in my comments, we went through a budgetary process where they had meetings all over the province. They spent a lot of money, actually, to get people all across the province to give debate, and yet they didn't even let the findings of all the input be taken to committee before they tabled their budget. So I'm a little bit cynical that this one is very similar. We're going to control the timelines. We're going to control, relatively, who's going to be in there—a very, very short timeline to be able to do this, and yet, back in October, there was no need to do this.

I need to keep going back there, because I want one of them at some point when they speak to answer this question: Why, in October, were you unanimously opposed to voting for electoral reform and third-party financing reform, and yet today we want to rush this through and have it done by the fall? Is it because you've now filled your coffers? You have lots of money in there and there's a little bit of a distinct advantage if you can shut down the ability for the other two parties, or anyone else out there, to do fundraising at the same level. Just a thought process—if they want to answer that, that would be wonderful.

The Chief Electoral Officer has done a good job of calling to our attention and to the attention of Ontario taxpayers, Ontario voters, many loopholes that exist in our financing laws. It was in response to those concerns that he has been raising for years that my colleagues and I did introduce, as I've just said, legislation to fix third-party fundraising. It was introduced by Rick Nicholls, Ted Arnott in 2011—sorry. I should use Wellington–Halton Hills—my apologies—Chatham–Kent–Essex, my colleague Rick Nicholls, in 2014, and myself from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound as recently as last year.

I get that we're in the House. We're in the thrust of opposition versus them being in power, but when one of your duly designated officers of this Legislature brings

this to your attention twice, it begs the question of all Ontarians as to why they did not, in one of those reports, step up and say, "We'll fix this. We'll do it within the next year, before the next election cycle." They had two election opportunities to do that, and they did not do that. This is a non-partisan officer of this Legislature bringing very valid concerns to their attention, and yet they did not do it. So we actually had to utilize our private members' business to be able to do that. Again, Mr. Speaker—I'm going to say it unequivocally a number of times—they voted down unanimously those proposed changes each time.

Back in April, we tried again with my leader, Patrick Brown, to present our party's six-point plan to clean up political financing in Ontario. In addition to calling for an immediate public inquiry, we were also asking for the creation of a special select committee with equal representation from all parties that will take public input from across the province.

I go back again to the House leader talking about opening debate and strengthening democracy, and yet we asked for a select committee to allow open debate among all three parties—in fact, the Green Party wanted to be part of that as well—and yet they've turned that down and they've controlled behind closed doors, really, this debate. It leaves me a little bit cynical about where we're going to go and what we're going to be able to achieve when we're truly not allowed to have—we've had a lot of good work done with select committees in here. We've had some mental health initiatives come out of this. We have the sexual task force that was created.

So with this one, which is, again, definitely fundamental to democracy, I find it very strange. I would again encourage one of the members opposite in the Liberal Party to explain to us, and explain, more importantly, to their voters, to the people they represent—and all Ontarians, frankly—why they are so against a select committee to be able to debate something that is so fundamental to our democracy.

We're asking for limits to third-party special interest advertising. As I said earlier, the Chief Electoral Officer has built a case. They've gone from less than \$1 million to, in the last election, a third-party advertising spend of \$8.6 million, more than the three parties combined. That, to me, frankly, is just wrong. Each of us has to be able to step up and be willing to put our name on a ballot, but we have to be able to play by the same very fair, equal ground rules. When other parties or other third-party interest groups can have that much influence—particularly financial influence, which I don't have access to—then we need a change. That's why I brought my private member's bill, as well as the feedback we received from the Chief Electoral Officer, who point-blank put this in front of the Liberals twice and said, "I have very, very significant concerns."

You would have thought, on principle, ethics and just pure belief in democracy, they would have taken self-initiative then to correct these rules and done it openly, with a select committee. You would have thought they would have wanted to come across the aisle and ask for

input. As they say, "We want to collaborate. We want to work with the other parties." Here is a prime example of when we've opened the door and encouraged them publicly and loudly to do that, and yet they've said no.

We're asking for a complete phase-out of union and corporate donations. We asked for an end to ministerial fundraising targets. It's unacceptable. People across the aisle will refute this, I'm sure, and say, "Well, you guys have fundraisers too." Yes, but the last time I noticed, not one single person in my party or in the NDP was able to sign a contract with a vendor for government business. Unless I've missed something here in my five years, I'm not certain that we have that influence. I know I have never signed a contract on behalf of the government. Someday hopefully, we will be able to do that, in the near future—2018, if you want to mark it on your calendar, would be wonderful.

But at this point, it is just wrong. The public is asking me—when I go home to my riding, significantly, and down here when I'm in Toronto, when I'm out, people are approaching me and saying, "What's up with this government? They had that culture of entitlement and now they're spreading it out, saying 'You have to pay to be able to talk to me.'" Whether they have or haven't done the influencing, the doubt and the perception remains in the mind of the voter, and that's what we need to clean up. If we want to have a true and open democracy, we need the people to have faith and hope in their government that they're going to have those integral aspects.

And we've asked for a strengthening of lobbying restrictions, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, serious allegations have been raised as to the conduct of this Liberal government, and the perception is growing that it may have turned doing government business into a money-making machine for the Ontario Liberal Party. Integrity is a foundation of trust with the people of Ontario, and the people of Ontario have lost trust in this government.

Laughter.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's not funny. I hear members across laughing. It's you that they're talking about. It's not us. It's people who are banging on our doors, sending us emails, asking for public inquiries, asking us to make sure there's a select committee, so that they will actually feel truly represented and that it's not a self-serving initiative yet again. They're challenging it.

I brought up the energy file earlier, because that's the thing I hear the most about in my riding. The mismanagement of that file alone has people very provoked across this province and worried about where our future is going to go, worried about their business, worried about seniors, worried about people who cannot afford their hydro bills and worried about young people like these new pages who have joined us today—welcome, pages; it's quite an interesting day for you to come in on. People are worried about where we're going, and they need to have that integrity of government, that trust and faith and hope in a government.

The reality is that this government doesn't want to talk about their past conduct. They're only talking about changing the rules because it looks and appears to most people in the public like they got caught. Otherwise, why the urgency? Why, for the last eight or 10 years, have we not changed the rules for fundraising, Mr. Speaker? Why have they not—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I need to ask the government members to please refrain from heckling the member. The member has the floor.

Member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, sorry to interrupt.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It seems I've hit a nerve with some people over there. Maybe they're finally looking in the mirror and saying, "I maybe should have thought differently when I made some of those decisions. I should maybe step up and represent the people who give me the privilege to be here. Maybe I should do the right thing, not the partisan policy"—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Member for Ottawa-Orléans, please refrain from heckling. The member for Kitchener Centre, please refrain from heckling the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who has the floor.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Obviously there are two people I've hit a nerve with. They must be looking in the mirror every day feeling badly about themselves, because I don't know why they would heckle me on something as simplistic as this. It's about democracy, Mr. Speaker. It's about having an open-door discussion with the people who are going to be involved. Why would they not allow a select committee? Why would they not allow a public inquiry into something as fundamental to our democracy as this, unless they're starting to feel guilty that they've been doing it for the wrong reasons and that they've been standing for the wrong principles?

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I continue to suggest that a full investigation is required, a public inquiry is required, and a select committee for this, so that everybody has their fair ability. When the Premier comes along, whether it's on a napkin or a 15-page document only constructed and crafted by her, and says, "Here it is," that is not open debate on something as fundamental—

Mr. Jim McDonell: That's what got us into trouble in the first place.

Mr. Bill Walker: That's what got us into trouble in the first place. Absolutely.

Mr. Speaker, conducting government business should not be used as a money-making machine. This is about the people of Ontario, the province, the future of these pages and all of the young people in our province. It's time to end the Liberals' cash-for-access fundraisers. It's time to do the right thing. It's time to call the inquiry.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask one more time for a select committee on this actual issue, so that we can have full debate and not rush it through so that we have a fear that it's again being controlled by one party for self-serving interests. It needs to be fully open, fully transparent, fully accountable.

To again quote my good friend the government House leader, he believes that this is fundamental democracy. The core of his being believes in the process they are following. If it's truly the core of his being, then it should be open, it should be accountable, it should be transparent, and it should have full engagement of all three political parties.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I have to say that it's going to be awfully hard to follow the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, because you made some fabulous points. You always speak on behalf of your constituents with such passion and such depth, and I know they appreciate it.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that they appreciate it because I visited the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound's riding last summer, and we had some good times together. Before I get into debating this political financing reform, I just want to speak for a second about the member. It's not just that he brought me to Chapman's ice cream and we got to, first of all, see how brilliantly they recovered from their tragic fire and the fact that they have just built one of the most modern facilities in Canada, and they allowed us to sample pretty much anything we wanted. It took a lot of bike rides and a lot of walking the week or two after that to lose the extra calories gained from all the sampling. What I wanted to refer to was the high praise that the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound received everywhere we went. We spent a couple of days together, and the people I was introduced to had a lot of nice things to say, and so I wanted to acknowledge that. That's why the passion comes out.

The member spoke several times about the select committee with equal representation. He spoke several times about having equal representation on a select committee. That just fundamentally would have been the right thing to do. It would have been the fair thing to do. It kind of takes the politics out of everything when you have two or three members, perhaps, from each party. You can speak from the heart and know that one party doesn't have more votes than the other. If you look at the committees today, we sit on the Standing Committee on Finance, and there are six members from the government side, there are two members from the official opposition and one member from the third party—

Ms. Catherine Fife: A good member.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: A great member from the third party.

It just tells you that no matter what we do, no matter how many facts we present and no matter, quite frankly, Speaker, how right we are, we get outvoted six-to-three,

six-to-three, six-to-three. It just happens. That's what's going to happen on this entire political financing reform.

As the good member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound already said, this thing was written on the back of a napkin, on a kitchen table—we know that now. We understand that. Everybody in Ontario understands that. That's why we don't have a comprehensive bill here, with input from all parties. We have it force-fed from the Liberal government, much in the way they force-fed all of their other bills, which is why the province is in so very much trouble right across the issues—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: If the member from Barrie lets me have the floor—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for Barrie to please stop heckling the member from Nipissing.

The member for Nipissing has the floor.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I know she needs to get all she can say in because she's not going to be here in two years. We understand that fully. So I can appreciate why she wants to continue to heckle, but that's not going to get her anywhere.

Let me tell you, Speaker, if you want to know about the—if you want to hear about—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Can we please recognize that the member for Nipissing has the floor and extend to him the respect that every member of the Legislature is entitled to, which is to be heard.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: You earn respect.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Nipissing has the floor.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. When they speak while you're standing, you can you imagine the fun that we have trying to speak while we're trying to make our points across here as well.

I know that the House leader on the government side spoke about being collaborative and co-operative, but, Speaker, this is anything but collaborative and co-operative. What we're going to see here is six to two to one, a six to three. Instead of having a select committee with equal representation, we're going to have the arrogance that this government has displayed on every bill, which, again, is why the only time we're ever really going to get to the bottom of an issue—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Excuse me, Speaker, I'm really trying to concentrate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the Minister of Education to please stop heckling the member for Nipissing. One member has the floor. You can't engage in a constant dialogue with the member who has the floor. When you get your turn, you can stand up and speak if you choose to. There's still time on the clock for your side.

The member for Nipissing has the floor.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you. I'll try again, Speaker. I can appreciate why, because they know what we're

going to talk about here. They know they got caught yet again. They know I'm going to talk about the Liberal cash-for-access fundraisers that they have. They know that. They know that's coming, so why don't we just spend the time right now talking about the fact that the government has held, over the last two years, 90 of these cash-for-access fundraisers. That's why they've scrambled this bill together, to have us debating this bill, as a distraction from the fact of why we're doing this: the fact that they got caught yet again with these cash-for-access fundraisers. We'll talk about a couple of them, because they really do affect the economies in Ontario, and the burden that this has placed on families.

Look at the wind programs that have just happened. It was shown in the Legislature by one of our members. The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London brought to the floor the fact that, of all of the wind turbine contracts that were given just this past year, all of the successful bidders were donors, big donors, to the Liberal Party. The ones who didn't get a contract, the ones who weren't successful, weren't on the list of donors. So this leads you to believe, it leads one to make the assumption, that there's pay to play: You pay, you get to play in Ontario; you don't pay, you don't get to play. It leads you to that assumption.

As a result, we have the highest energy rates in North America, and they're only going higher, Speaker. When this government took office, before all this happened, energy rates were 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour. Now we've got all these pay-to-play programs and, lo and behold, energy rates are now over 18 cents a kilowatt hour. We've got the highest energy in Ontario. We've got a government that continues down a path of putting out these programs that are hurting the people of Ontario, but the people who are continually winning these contracts are donating to the Liberal Party. So it gives the appearance that there's this pay to play. And that's—
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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm afraid I have to caution the member for Nipissing. You can't impute motive, and you're getting very close to that line. I would ask him to be very cautious in terms of the language when he wants to characterize the nature of this problem—this issue.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I appreciate that, Speaker. Thank you for setting up the guidelines. I do appreciate that.

If the Premier and her ministers have nothing to hide, they wouldn't be running from a public inquiry; they wouldn't be running from a select committee that has equal membership. Speaker, as you well know, because we've been together here for a while, I was heavily involved in the gas plant scandal and all of the documents, and here's what happened. During the minority government, it was a little different. The official opposition had three members on the committee, the third party had two members and the government had four members. It made for quite interesting days, where we were able to get access to documents and were, at the end of the day, almost able to get to the truth of the gas plant scandal

when the election was called. The moment we got back and there was a majority government, the first thing the Premier did was shut down the committee and not allow the rest of the witnesses who had been summoned and scheduled to come to that committee. That's what is going to happen here.

Then the government used their majority to deliver, produce and publish in this Legislature what I would call a sanitized version of what happened. They didn't even talk about the fact that the OPP was involved, pressing charges. None of that even made it into the report. That's what is going to happen when you've got this Liberal government writing the rules and then passing the legislation. That's exactly what is going to happen. Here we were in the gas plant scandal hearings, we were almost there, a couple of people left to hear from, and the moment this government was able to shut it down, they shut it down and provided a report that led you to believe one thing, when the facts were actually quite distinctly different than that.

So I worry, as many people in Ontario worry, that that is what is going to happen here. We're going to have a version of this bill pass because it's a majority government, and because there is not equal representation on the select committee, we're going to have yet another one of these force-fed programs where the government is going to do what they want and damn the torpedoes. That's what it's going to be.

For the sake of restoring the public's trust, if they can—and I'm not sure they can—I think the Premier should do the right thing: call this inquiry and set up the select committee with equal representation. I say “restoring the public's trust” because the public has no trust in this government. Now that the gas plant scandal is out of our reach and we don't get any new documents, the only time we got to the truth of what this government was really all about was by breaking open another box of the gas plant scandal documents and being shocked and surprised at what this government really thought, what they really had. Because never in their wildest dreams would they have ever imagined we were going to read on a daily basis what they were saying amongst each other. But we got a real window into the inner workings of the Liberal Party.

Sadly, with the Premier shutting down that committee, we don't have access any longer. Now the only time we can get to the real facts is when we do a freedom of information or when we hear—thankfully—from the Auditor General. She provides us with honest-to-God facts. When we hear from the Financial Accountability Officer, we hear honest-to-God facts from him as well.

One of the facts last week—the week before, actually—was that whenever this government gives us projections, he called them serially wrong. They were serially wrong. That means they're always wrong. That doesn't instill confidence in the government, knowing that their numbers are wrong every time. Their projections are wrong every time. That's from our own Financial Accountability Officer.

We get the truth from FOI, we get the truth from the Auditor General, we get the truth from the Financial Accountability Officer and—which really sheds light on what’s happening in Ontario—we get the truth from the Ontario Provincial Police. That’s what we’re at today. In the province of Ontario—the once-powerful province of Ontario, once the engine of Confederation, this now have-not province—we need the Ontario Provincial Police to get us the truth about Ornge, about the Sudbury alleged bribery, about the gas plant scandal. We need Ontario Provincial Police to get us our facts, because we can no longer rely on anything this government tells us.

These are the people, Speaker, who are going to be putting this very financing reform together. I could make many, many parallels but I’m not really sure that any of them are going to pass the parliamentary language rules.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Try it.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I won’t even try.

This is going to be the government—this scandal-plagued group of mismanagers are the ones who are going to be not only crafting this financing reform, but they’re the ones who are going to have the majority to vote in favour of it. That scares me and I think it scares most people in Ontario.

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, that was one that I was going to use, actually, but I’m not going to. I’m going to try to keep it parliamentary.

When I hear the House leader saying, “We’re going to set up this committee; it’s going to travel”—and by the way, I do like the amendment very much, the one that changes, “That the committee be authorized to meet for one week in June, two weeks in July and one week in August, for the purpose of public hearing”—the fact that it’s changed now to that they can meet four weeks throughout the summer and bring a staffer. I think that’s a positive amendment. I think that’s good, but it also brings an interesting point up, one that we just got through only a few months ago.

We had pre-budget consultations all across Ontario. We travelled—men and women, organizations, stakeholders, groups, companies, unions: All travelled all throughout Ontario to bring their contribution to the discussion. And here we’re going to see travel for a month this summer. The shocking revelation—again, it was only discovered through a freedom-of-information request, this one from the Canadian Press, Allison Jones. She brought the fact that while these groups were spending money travelling, while this Legislature was spending \$100,000 to send us to Thunder Bay and Windsor and Hamilton and Ottawa and Sault Ste. Marie—all of that travel, Speaker—what we learned through freedom of information, not from this government and their denials, was that while the committee was still meeting, the government not only had the budget written; it was being translated. That was discovered by Canadian Press.

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Again, when they talk about “collaborative” and “co-operative,” they’re beautiful words to be using. But

they’re going to travel now for a month. What assurances do we have that this is not a repeat, that they’re not already translating the bill that they’ve got written? There are no assurances, and quite frankly, Speaker, if they gave us any assurances, we wouldn’t believe them. We’ve been burned far too many times.

They were translating the budget that was already written while they had us travelling the province under this sham. We had become unwitting participants in the Liberal government’s sham that they really wanted to hear from the people of Ontario. They had no desire to hear. The budget was written and being translated.

That is what we’re concerned about: that that could also be happening, and that we’re being set up yet again. It gives the appearance of collaboration and co-operation and, “Oh, isn’t it wonderful that we’re all travelling and listening to you?”, but there are no assurances. We’ll have to do a freedom of information yet again to find out how much of this was written beforehand.

The reason we’re doing this is to divert attention from the real issue: that the government got caught again. They got caught with ministers with quotas. They needed to bring in so much money. We’re not talking small change here; we’re talking about ministers whose quotas were \$300,000, \$400,000 or \$500,000 that they needed to bring in as part of their role as that minister. It’s shocking, and so revealing, that this is what they were doing.

Now they’ve got us here debating a motion and an amendment about fundraising—an admirable thing to be talking about, which we have asked for beforehand, as the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound said—but it took them getting caught yet again in another scandal. This time it had the appearance that their members—well, the fact; there’s no appearance. It’s a fact that their members were under orders to raise money.

So you’ve got the Hydro One deal. You’ve got banks that were involved in the Hydro One deal, and now you’ve got those same people holding fundraisers for the Liberal Party. Again, they’re not small-change fundraisers; they’re big fundraisers—hundreds of thousands of dollars brought in. There’s an appearance that comes from this, Speaker, and not a very nice appearance of what could be happening out there.

There were 90 pay-to-access fundraisers over two years. It only increases the perception that the Wynne Liberals have turned the government into a money-making machine for the Liberal Party, and that is just beyond the pale. That tells you where their focus is.

At one of the pre-budget consultations—I’ve said this story many times in the Legislature—Jennifer told us the story where she has to decide whether to heat or eat because she cannot afford both. She told us that she turns her heat off when she gets up in the morning and turns it back on for a short period at low-cost times. It was a heart-wrenching story of a woman, a real person with a real name, who sat in front of the all-party committee.

It tells you that this government’s attention is not on Jennifer, the Jennifers of the world, the Jennifers of Ontario or the families or the seniors. It’s all about the

fundraising. That has been their focus. It would be pretty hard to raise \$500,000 through the course of a year if you're not really focused on it. They've got to be spending an enormous amount of their ministerial time raising money for the party—for the machine—instead of taking care of Jennifer and her hydro bill.

They're holding these fundraisers. They're attending these fundraisers: the Hydro One deal, a big fundraiser afterward, hundreds and hundreds of thousands; the wind deals, hundreds and hundreds of thousands. These aren't to the benefit of the people of Ontario, Speaker. These are the same people who now are going to be crafting this bill around it. Well, there's still no restriction in this new bill for the cash-for-access ministerial fundraising scheme.

The legislation does not address the changes to the rules for lobbyists or political staff. There are significant loopholes in the bill for third-party special interest advertising to remain. No, they didn't take care of any of those things that the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound brought with such passion in his private member's bill. No, those don't get addressed. It's diverting attention from the fact that this is a very serious fundraising machine that got caught doing what they do, and now we're throwing this political fundraising reform and looping everybody into it, except that it's not fixing the real problems and it's distracting. It's designed to distract the media, the members and the people of Ontario from the fact that they got caught again in a very serious world of fundraising.

Those Hydro One deals and the wind turbine deals that I spoke of, where they got hundreds of thousands in cash from the proponents, didn't help lower our hydro rates. In fact, for each and every one of them, the end result has increased our hydro rates. I spoke earlier of the 4.3 cents when this government took office and 18 cents plus now in the peak rates. Well, they're only going up now. The Auditor General herself told us.

In the December report, the auditor told us that we paid \$9.2 billion more for green energy than we ought to have for the same amount of green energy. It's that overly lucrative deal that this government did and, lo and behold, the proponents who won the contracts are donors. They've certainly done well by the donors, but they've not done so well by the people of Ontario, the Jennifers.

The seniors I had in my office in North Bay a couple of months ago, when we were fighting the doubling of their drug costs—you know, our press interviewed many of them. We were all there for this drug cost announcement, which we won—we won that battle; it got pulled out of the budget—but all of them diverted their discussion to energy, because it's their number one issue. These are men and women who have these huge bills that they weren't expecting, and they gave their stories individually to our media in North Bay at that announcement.

I remember that Bonnie Beam was one of them. Bonnie told us how she only heats one room in her house. I know Bonnie. Bonnie worked at the bank I banked at for years. I've known her for many, many

years. I hadn't seen her in a long time. She showed up at a seniors' forum that I held. She showed up there and spoke to the media. I had no idea what she was going to speak on, and I was shocked when she told the media that she can only heat one room in her house. I was shocked at that. That's the reality.

Interjections.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: That's not funny. They can continue to laugh, Speaker, but I tell you it's not funny. My jaw dropped when I was listening to Bonnie tell that story.

But the government, the Liberal Party, goes ahead with these funders with these energy companies and ends up charging us the highest rates in North America. This is the direct correlation we have. This is what is going to continue to happen.

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If we have this government write the rules, there's none of the restrictions for the cash for access to these ministers. That doesn't get fixed. So the real problem that started all of this is allowed to continue. Instead, they've glossed over and papered over, with big announcements—written on a napkin at the kitchen table—all the stories and how wonderful it is, but it doesn't fix the problem. They got caught. They got caught again, and that very problem they got caught doing is not getting fixed.

Speaker, we continue to ask for a public inquiry, we continue to ask for a select committee with equal representation, because the bulk of the Liberal scandal has gone unaddressed. They've skated by the scandal, skirted around the scandal, and now we're talking about fixing something that needs fixing, no doubt, but it allows them to change the channel from the serious discussion about their heinous scandal. Now we know why the government has drafted this legislation behind closed doors. It allows them to control the process. They're pulling all the strings, all the levers. They get to control all of the process, which means they control the outcome.

Now, what is collaborative and co-operative, as the House leader said, about the you-shall-do and you-shall-accept bill that's being presented? They get to control the outcome; they get to ensure that the new system benefits them. That's what this is all about. It's not about helping Ontario. This should be absolutely bipartisan. This is going to be forever, possibly. There should be an equal amount of representatives from all the parties so that we can hash this out and really talk about what's important to fix. They don't want us to fix this. The loopholes that allow them to do their access fundraising are not going to change.

We want to see financing legislation that's best for the people of Ontario, and sadly, we're not going to get there with this. We are not going to arrive at a conclusion that's successful for the people of Ontario. We're only going to arrive at a conclusion that meets the needs of the Liberal Party, because they're in control. They're running the table. Every step of it is controlled by them. There's no middle ground. There's no give and take. They are

always trying to rig the system to benefit the Liberal Party.

The Auditor General spoke to us last December about the Government Advertising Act, 2004, when they changed that. There was no debate. They just went in and changed this thing that allows them to run partisan ads so that the Auditor General will not be signing off on these things. She doesn't want to sign off on these things, because it would mean she has given her approval. It's the same people here who did that, changed the government rules to set up the system so that it's only in their favour. It's the same people here who are setting this up so that it will not affect anybody to their benefit, other than the members of the Liberal Party.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Let me say, Mr. Speaker, I'm not pleased to take part in this debate whatsoever. We have an opportunity here to do the right thing. The government could still decide, if it wanted to, to do what my leader and the leaders of the Conservatives and the Green Party have suggested, which is to go the route of a non-partisan process by which we make changes to the act.

Let me say up front, this whole notion that somehow or other the New Democrats and Conservatives are opposed to changes to election financing rules is bogus. We have said from the beginning—and I will not speak for the Conservative Party, but I'll speak for New Democrats—that we have no problem with changing the rules. In fact, these are positions that we've advocated for years. We've often said that the system they had in Ottawa which Mr. Chrétien put in place actually made some sense. It essentially took the influence out of politics that could exist as a result of people giving money to political parties and political candidates, and to members once they get to this House.

So I want to be clear: New Democrats have said we're not opposed to making changes to the Election Finances Act. We think, in fact, that it's a welcome step. But our argument is that if you're going to make those changes, you have to do those changes in a way that's non-partisan and not driven by one political party, because in this case what you've got is the Premier of Ontario who supposedly sat down at her kitchen table with her family members and drafted a bill.

Hey, I'm a member of the Assembly. That's my job, not her family members. So, first of all, that bill was drafted—as I understand it, as far as the idea of it—on napkins at the kitchen table at the Premier's house. There's nothing wrong with people having discussions with their own families and having discussions with friends about legislation. God, all of us do that at one time or another. But when it comes to the drafting of legislation, it's a completely different question.

I get it. Normally, the government drafts the bill, just as I, as a private member, can draft a bill. But there are times where we have to take the politics out of the drafting. If you look at what we've done as far as evolving the Election Act and evolving the Election Finances Act,

we've gone from a system that was completely controlled by the government to a system that was more non-partisan.

Back in the days of the mid-1970s, there was a Conservative government in place with Mr. Davis, and there were allegations at the time of inappropriateness when it came to fundraising and the uses of those dollars, so there was a pressure. The opposition, the New Democrats and Liberals of the day, came into the House, they asked questions and they pushed the government. The media wrote stories. It was on TV and on the radio. Finally, the government relented and said, "Yeah, we need to make changes to the Election Finances Act."

So what they did is that there was a commission that was called the Camp commission, which was a non-partisan organization made up of scholars, judges, retired judges and others who were charged with looking at a number of things. One of the things that they were given the task to look at was how to change the Election Finances Act.

Much of what we have in the act today is the result of the exercise that was had back in the 1970s. That's when we put limits on how much money you can give. That's when we put limits on how much money you can spend. Some of the things that were done have survived since the 1970s, in the changes that were recommended by the Camp Commission.

But it didn't end there, because over the years there had to be changes made to the Election Finances Act, as there were changes to the Election Act itself. When those came around, there was a way of doing it that was somewhat modelled on what the Camp commission had done.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Somewhat.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, somewhat modelled. It was certainly not the government drafting the legislation. What you had was a process whereby a non-partisan committee—in one case I remember there was a committee that was struck with one member from each caucus, tasked with, I believe it was, changes to the Election Finances Act. It might have been the Election Act, but I think it was the Election Finances Act. That was under the former Dalton McGuinty government.

They sat down, the three of them, and they heard submissions from the experts, being the Chief Electoral Officer and others. There was some discussion at that committee, because you're allowed to have a committee of one member from each caucus, and they came to a consensus about what could be done. A bill was then drafted based on that consensus.

You can't change the vehicles of democracy by majority. It's just a bad idea. You change the vehicles of democracy, being your Election Act and your Election Finances Act, in a non-partisan way that is completely transparent, that the public can have some confidence in.

So when my leader Andrea Horwath got up and said at the very beginning that she wasn't buying to the Premier's process, it wasn't about grandstanding, as the Premier wants to make it: "Oh there she goes, the leader of the third party New Democrats, Ms. Horwath. She's

just grandstanding.” It’s not about grandstanding. It’s about doing your bloody job as an opposition leader and saying, “Hey, you can’t do this by majority. If you’re going to make changes to the Election Act, fine, we’ll give you recommendations of things that we can live with.”

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In fact, we gave the government a list of things that we thought were important to include in a bill, should we go down that way. The government keeps on saying, “They never gave us anything. They didn’t talk to us. They’re just trying to stall.” No, my leader was clear in the beginning: “The process has to be non-partisan. When the process is established, here are some of the points that you have to cover in drafting legislation.” She spoke to some of those things that essentially everybody is talking about: Should there be corporate and union donations? What about limits when it comes to how much you can spend? Third-party—all of that stuff. It’s all legitimate stuff that we need to deal with. But you do it in a non-partisan process. You don’t do it by way of a government majority using its majority to do it.

The first part was that we didn’t buy into this process that the government put in place that essentially allows them to draft a bill that they’re then, by way of a majority at committee and in the House, going to plow through whatever they want. We said that we want a process where a bill is drafted with a consensus of the three parties—or what we actually asked for was a non-partisan process, similar to the Camp commission, to be able to do what had to be done. That was the first one.

The second thing is, the government says, “Oh, yes, but you guys are trying to hold it up.” Hogwash. We gave letters to the government that said, “We can live with your timeline. We can live with the bill coming back to the House in September, that the bill be passed before the end of the fall session and starting on January 1 next year, that the new election finances rules are established and begin on January 1 of next year.” So the government said that we were trying to slow things down—no such thing. We were never trying to slow anything down. It was about the process. It’s like saying, okay, somebody just got caught for something, and you can name your brother-in-law the judge. Well, my brother-in-law likes me. I don’t know about you guys. I don’t think my brother-in-law would throw me in jail. George? Bob? Would you guys throw me in jail? I don’t think they would. My point is, it’s similar. It’s like the old South or the old West: “Yeah, the judge is my buddy, and whatever you want, you’re gonna get.” That’s essentially what we’re doing here. The government has decided to use its majority in order to draft legislation to get the result it wants in the end.

New Democrats agree that there has to be change. For some of the changes that the government talked about, we said, “Yes, we can live with those.” We gave them some information as to some of the things that we wanted to see, and we never, at any time, tried to slow this process down.

The government said, “We’re going to continue this little charade for a bit longer.” They came to the House leaders’ meetings, and they gave us motions for midnight sittings in the last two weeks of the House. I’ve been around here for a long time, just as has the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. Has there been an end-of-session where you have not seen those motions? Of course. It’s like motherhood and apple pie. At the end of the session, you see these motions to sit till midnight. So that didn’t really bother me. They said, “Oh, that’s in case you guys start filibustering in the House and hold up the legislation. We’re going to need that to pass it.” My God, you have the rules of the House. You can pass bills through this House in seven to eight hours. Call the question or use a time allocation motion. You don’t need me to do it.

But I’m the only speaker in our caucus speaking to this motion. Are we holding this thing up? I don’t have anybody else who’s getting up after me—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Do you want to get up?

Ms. Catherine Fife: No, it’s okay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: All right. We just worked it out. She doesn’t want to get up.

Mr. John Vanthof: I’m thinking about it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, you’re thinking about it? We’re negotiating here. It’s not like the British Parliament where you negotiate for dollars.

The point is, I’m the only speaker. We never intended to hold up the legislation. Our number one concern is—let’s make changes to the act. We agree. But those changes to the act have to be done within a process that is transparent and non-partisan because there are a number of things that are going to happen in changes to this bill that people are going to have to live with.

I give you but one example: the third-party provisions of this bill when it comes to advertising. I understand why the government wants to limit third-party advertising. There are some logical arguments. I can understand the argument of why you’d want to make sure that somebody who has bagfuls of money, like Donald Trump, could come in and skew an election—I get it. I understand that. It turns out he doesn’t have as many bags of money as he said he did, but that’s for another debate.

But on the other hand, there is a democratic right of citizens to be able to express their view on what a government did, didn’t do or should do. Yes, it means that you’ve got to mount a campaign, that people have to go out and knock on doors and put out flyers and buy advertising on radio, paper and TV to be able to put out their message. This government is saying, “Oh, we have got a solution here.” What a nice solution for Liberals. One good one for the Liberals, one bad one for democracy. Is the limit \$100,000?

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: A \$100,000 limit in the six months leading to a campaign that any group will be able to spend on third-party advertising on any issue.

Let me give you what this means. Remember those parents who were here with the autistic kids? I am sure those parents are going to want to have some kind of a campaign if the government doesn't back down—and I certainly hope the government backs down on the autistic file and grandfathers all those kids. That would be a great thing to do, and you would have our support if you did that.

Mr. John Vanthof: That would be the right thing to do.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It would be the right thing to do. But let's say the government doesn't. Do you expect that those parents will sit back and do nothing? Those parents are going to say, "I want to mount a campaign in the next election and I want to put this issue front and centre. Which of you out there are going to support giving IBI therapy to kids over age five? Who's going to take care of my kid?" They're going to go to me and they're going to go to my leader, Andrea Horwath, and they're going to go to this member over here and his leader, Mr. Brown, and they're going to do the same thing to the Liberals, and they're going to say, "Which of you is going to stand for my child?" And, yes, they're going to want to spend some money on advertising in order to let people know that if you were ever to have a child who has autism and needs to have IBI therapy, God forbid, what the government has done is harmful to their well-being and their outcomes.

But what the government is proposing in this bill, the way it's drafted now, is that you can only spend up to \$100,000 for the six months leading into the campaign. That means to say, you buy one—well, not even a full-page ad in the *Toronto Star*. A full-page ad is maybe \$100,000.

Mr. Paul Miller: And you're done.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Then you're done; you can't do anything else—one media outlet. If you go to Global or CTV and you try to buy advertising on television in prime time—we all know how expensive it is. We have to do it. It's hugely expensive. They won't be able to. They will be left with standing on the street corner yelling and saying, "Hey, everybody, look over here, look at the autism file." But guess who gets to advertise through this entire process for six months?

Mr. Paul Miller: The government.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The government can advertise all it wants. They're not limiting how much money the government can spend in order to say how great a job they've done on whatever file. I'm sure to God we're going to see government advertising of the Premier doing the bionic jog on television—

Mr. Paul Miller: "Brought to you by the government of Ontario."

Mr. Gilles Bisson: "Brought to you by the government" of Ontario. There will be all kinds of this stuff, six months before the next election, where the government is going to be saying, "We've invested in health care. Look how much health care is better today." They will have pictures of smiling people and children and everybody is

going to go all warm and fuzzy inside. Even though we know that they've cut health care, they've fired nurses, they've laid off staff in hospitals, they're going to put that advertising out there anyway. They will not be limited by this bill that is being proposed.

Well, that's not the way this process should work. The rules of democracy should be the same for everybody. Should there be a limit or some sort of control on third-party advertising? Absolutely. I have no argument. I don't think anybody on this side of the House—I don't know about the Conservatives; I haven't heard them speak to this, but I know with us, as New Democrats, we don't have a problem with that issue. But the way you deal with that is that you refer it to a non-partisan committee to look at it and say, "How do you balance off the rights of democracy of those people and that group against"—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I like talking to the member from Barrie. I can't help it. Mr. Speaker, I hope you're not offended. I really do.

But I just say that you can't do that, because at the end, this should be a system that works for the people of Ontario. If citizens want to organize and raise some dollars and do some advertising on an issue of their choice, they should be allowed to do that. Should there be limits? Should there be rules? Absolutely. But let a non-partisan committee look at how that can be done in a way that works.

There are other proposals in this bill that are equally as concerning, and some of it is quite confusing. A number of us—I don't think everybody in the House has read the bill, but I've tried, about three attempts, to read my way through this bill. I normally try to read bills so I'm up on it. I'll tell you, it is a very hard bill to follow. Number one, because you have to, in some cases, refer back to the existing legislation to understand what it is they're amending, which is normal, but the other part of it is that, in some of it, you don't quite really understand what the government is getting at, and you go, "Does this mean what I think it means?" It's not good stuff.

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The government has decided by way of this motion to order the bill, after first reading, into committee, which is their right, but what they should have done is what Andrea Horwath, Patrick Brown and the leader of the Green Party had suggested: Refer this matter to a non-partisan committee that is able to look at what is better when it comes to changes to the finances act so that the principles that we want as members and that the Premier wants are followed by way of what will come out as a bill. But the government didn't do that. The government instead is saying, "All right, I'm going to do my own thing."

Okay, so they didn't do that. The government could have done something else, if they wanted to. They could have referred the matter to committee and have the committee draft the bill. The government kept on saying, "Oh, we can't do what has been done in the past by the

Conservative government of Bill Davis, by the Liberal government of Mr. Dalton McGuinty and by the NDP government of Bob Rae. We can't do that because, oh God, we'd be breaking the rules"—even though that's how everybody did it; they did it in a non-partisan way. They say, "We have to follow the rules of the Legislature."

Well, here's a rule, and I'm sure the government House leader knows about it: He could have referred the matter to committee, and said, "We want to refer to committee the issue of election finances. Here are some of the principles that we want looked at," and let the committee go out and draft the bill. It's within the standing orders of the Legislature. They didn't do that. You have got to ask yourself the question, why? Why wouldn't they take Andrea Horwath's suggestion, Patrick Brown's suggestion and Mr.—

Interjection: Schreiner.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Schreiner. I was going to say Schroeder, that's why I kept on—

Interjection: That's Charlie Brown.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Sorry about that. My apologies. That was a slip.

But the point is, why did the government refuse the request of three leaders of the major parties? There are four major parties in this province. Three leaders came together. I don't think that has ever been done before. When have you ever seen three political leaders of political parties get together and agree on doing something in a particular way? That's almost impossible. I give Andrea Horwath and her team great credit for having done that.

But ask yourself the question, why is it that the government doesn't want to do what Horwath has suggested or what the government could have done by ordering the matter to committee for the bill to be drafted? It's because they want to control the outcome. That's what this is all about. Let's not kid ourselves: The government decided—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What was that? Excuse me? Excuse me?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Tu es dans l'opposition.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, it's because we're in the opposition, I'm told. That's why.

Of course. Oh Lord. My God, imagine that the opposition would have any ideas. Oh my God, everybody, we should go home.

I think this is pretty well what this is all about—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I will not repeat who said that.

Mr. Bill Walker: I think you should.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, I'm not going to, it would not be fair.

Mr. John Vanthof: No gas for heat and no opposition.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: "No gas for heat and no opposition." That's a good one. I have got to repeat that: "No

gas for heat and no opposition." Wow, and high hydro bills.

But, Mr. Speaker, back to the debate. You have to ask yourself the question, why is it that the government has decided to do this on their own? It's not because we're opposition that we're doing this. It was Bill Davis who did it. It was Bob Rae who did. It was your own Premier Dalton McGuinty who did it.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Even Dalton McGuinty did it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Even Dalton McGuinty did it, and some of you served in cabinet with him. Why? Because they understood that some of these things you have to do in a non-partisan way. Dalton McGuinty created a committee, one member from each caucus, in order to give the recommendations on the drafting of legislation or amendment to legislation. Was he being partisan?

Mr. Paul Miller: She knows better.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, of course. Mr. Dalton McGuinty, what did he know? McGuinty understood that there are some things that you don't have the power to do if you really want to have the confidence of the public behind you.

So because the government wants to control the outcome, they've drafted a bill that has some good things in it. There are some things in this bill that are okay. I'm the first to admit it. But there are some things in this bill that are really problematic, like the rules for the third-party and other issues. So the government drafted a bill in order to essentially set the discussion—excuse me, the conversation. Remember when the Premier was first elected as leader of the party? She would say, "I want to have a conversation with Ontarians." I think she's having a conversation in the mirror: "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the smartest Premier of them all?" It's getting pretty quiet there these days.

Interjection: And what did the mirror say?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, there are some things I can't talk about in this House. I can't repeat what that mirror said.

My point is that she talked to herself and decided what was going to be in the bill. Then, to make it worse, she said, "Okay. Now I'm going to refer it to committee." So we have this motion, Mr. Speaker. The motion essentially sets out exactly what the government wants, as far as process.

They didn't refer it to a committee, as Dalton McGuinty did, which was a committee of equal representation on the committee. That's what Dalton McGuinty did. He referred it to a committee and said, "Equal representation on the committee and the parties work it out." No, no, she sent it to a standing committee of the Legislature that who has the majority on?

Mr. Paul Miller: Liberals.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The government.

Mr. John Vanthof: I believe that would be the government.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Exactly. The government has got a majority.

Here's what is going to happen. Our beloved colleague—I'm trying to look for the riding. Kitchener–Waterloo?

Interjection

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just Kitchener?

Catherine Fife—you don't want to be our beloved member?—stood in this House, question after question and kept asking over and over again, as our leader Andrea Horwath did, saying, "Why is this government so intent on doing this in a partisan way? Why is the government so decided to be able to control the outcome of this?" I think the answer is pretty clear.

Mr. Paul Miller: "My way or the highway."

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Exactly. As the member from Hamilton–Stoney Creek says, "My way or the highway." I believe it's a question of arrogance, to a certain degree, but the other thing is that it's more sinister than that. It's because they want to control the outcome. They want to play the game in a way that will be to the benefit of the Liberal Party.

Now I have to say that I was actually a bit taken aback in my riding last week. All of us were in constituency week, going around meeting with constituents and groups, and this issue didn't come up a lot, to be honest. Most people follow their hydro bill. They certainly knew about that. They certainly knew about natural gas. They knew about that. Oh, and they knew the autism file. My God, that came up a lot.

But a few people raised this one, and what I thought was interesting was that they said, "Well, there go the Liberals again. The Liberals are doing what's good for the Liberal Party." I got that twice, once in Kapuskasing and the other time, I think, in Timmins or Hearst, where I was. I think that's essentially the story: The Liberals are controlling the outcome because they're more worried about what is good for the Liberal Party and their benefit than what is good for the people of Ontario.

I'm not going to speak much longer on this; I think we're okay to go. I think we made the point. My leader was clear about what we should have done. Catherine Fife, the member from?

Mr. Paul Miller: Kitchener–Waterloo.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Kitchener–Waterloo. Thank you, I didn't know the riding.

Interjection: Our beloved member.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Our beloved member from Kitchener–Waterloo was clear in what we wanted. We were not opposed to the change. We think the change is not a bad thing; in fact, there should be changes made to the Election Finances Act. A good discussion about how we get where we've got to go is not a bad one, but it should have been a non-partisan process. This particular process that the government has established is one that controls the outcome, and we'll be voting against this motion for those reasons.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion number 74. Then Mr. Naqvi moved that the motion be amended as follows: That the clause, "That the committee be authorized to meet"—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Dispense?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No. Actually, I want to hear it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): "That the committee be authorized to meet for one week in June, two weeks in July and one week in August for the purpose of public hearings; and" be struck out and replaced with "That the committee be authorized to meet for"—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Dispense?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): "That the committee be authorized to meet for up to four weeks during the summer adjournment for the purpose of public hearings; and"

"That one staff person from each recognized party be authorized to travel with the committee; and"

We are now dealing with Mr. Naqvi's amendment to the motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Are members ready to vote on the main motion, as amended?

Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion 74. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion, as amended, carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

I have received a deferral notice from the chief government whip, pursuant to standing order 28(h), requesting that the vote on government notice of motion 74 be deferred until the time for deferred votes tomorrow, Tuesday, May 31, 2016. The request is from the chief government whip. As such, the vote is deferred.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day.

I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Attorney General has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1722.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
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Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
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**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 31 May 2016

Mardi 31 mai 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 31 May 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 31 mai 2016

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Hon. Jeff Leal: First of all, I want to wish my daughter Shanae all the very best in OFSAA tennis this morning out in Scarborough.

It's with great pleasure that we want to move forward with government order G151.

WASTE-FREE ONTARIO ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO SANS DÉCHETS

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 19, 2016, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016 and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur la récupération des ressources et l'économie circulaire et la Loi transitoire de 2016 sur le réacheminement des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a point of order.

Mr. Steve Clark: Is there a quorum, Speaker?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we have a quorum?

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): A quorum is present.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a quorum. Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker. I thought you were standing up on another matter there.

I am here to debate third reading of Bill 151, and I rise today to discuss a very important issue, because the environment is a huge piece of the way we live. Yesterday, we heard from indigenous peoples on how important Mother Earth is to our whole circular existence when it comes to human beings and the health of how we treat each other. If we don't have our environment, we actually aren't kind to each other, as described yesterday, so

I'm pleased to stand here today to discuss Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act, and its third reading here in this chamber.

I believe environmental governance at all levels is a critical factor in trying to support environmental sustainability, with the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable development, consumption and production. The waste we generate plays a critical role in today's society and economy. At the same time, it has major impacts on our environment and our health. Many forms of waste can and do become hazardous and pose dangers to our lives, to nature and to the communities we live in.

Waste and waste diversion are impacted by all three levels of government—federal, provincial and municipal—but we know that waste management in Canada is primarily regulated at the provincial level. Every day, Ontario generates more than 33,000 tonnes of waste. That's more than 900 kilograms per person each year. This is a massive problem, yet we continue to send waste materials, which can leak contaminants, to disposal sites and landfills. This typically requires more energy, resources and new materials than reusing or recycling does.

Most important are hazardous wastes, which are primarily generated by industrial and manufacturing processes, as they need special handling to minimize their effects on the environment and our health.

In Ontario, historically, waste-related issues have been regulated by the Environmental Protection Act, the Environmental Assessment Act and the Waste Diversion Act. Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2016, would now replace the Waste Diversion Act by enacting the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act.

The title and definition of "resource recovery and circular economy" have deliberately been left out of the act. We all know that this is a standard protocol when proposing legislation: to ensure that there are clearly worded definitions included. This ensures that there is no vagueness around the rights and responsibilities, and jurisdiction, yet it would seem that this government is bent on keeping this bill worded as vaguely as possible to prevent real accountability and responsibility.

I believe it was my colleague from Bramalea-Gore-Malton, in his comments on second reading, who rightfully called this bill enabling legislation. We have seen this behaviour a number of times from this government, where they create legislation around a general idea with built-in loopholes to ensure that they can't be held accountable or be transparent in case things don't play out as expected. This is a highly problematic approach to governance, yet it has become the new Liberal standard:

Title it progressively, write it vaguely and stand back and see what happens so they can deny responsibility.

Unfortunately, it's the people of Ontario who are left dealing with the problems created by this approach. They pay the price each and every time this House doesn't act with due diligence. I know that my colleagues tried to address this concern through committee, but few of our amendments were accepted by the government. But that's the job we are here for.

We are here to punish this government—excuse me—we are here to punish this government, but we are here more so to push this government to do the right thing for everyone. It's kind of funny how “push” turns unconsciously into “punish,” isn't it? Not only for themselves, but primarily we focused on cleaning up the ambiguous language they were hiding behind, but we had little luck with our efforts.

Local communities across the province need us to take the lead on this file. I spoke about the challenges with the landfill in my hometown of London. We have a large one, and since it was put in place, we have struggled with the implementation and adoption of recycling programs. Our green bin and composting programs have faced uphill battles, because it's easier and cheaper to dump our waste instead of reducing or reusing it.

We are on the path that leads away from sustainable consumption and production. We need to move beyond easy answers and start thinking about how best to promote resource and energy efficiency, sustainable infrastructure and providing access to basic services, green and decent jobs, and a better quality of life for all.

When we're talking about the environment, it's not just the moment. Environment is about the future and future generations, and the health of our Mother Earth. That's what we're doing here today: We're setting the tone; we're setting things in motion for the future of Mother Earth, the future of our children and what they inherit from us as legislators. If we integrate sustainable consumption and production into our efforts, we reduce future economic, environmental and social costs, strengthen our economy and economic competitiveness, and reduce poverty.

We also need to change the way we engage with municipalities. They need to be treated as equal partners at the table. Municipalities made crystal clear what they needed from us to help manage waste, recycling and reuse programs across the province. They were very vocal about what they needed in the bill. It was pretty clear, in bringing this bill forward and moving it through the legislative process, that full respect had to be accorded to municipalities, and that the bill needed changes to ensure that they were treated properly.

0910

Speaker, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario asked this government to hear them, to understand the reality of their experience. As the folks who are running the trucks and transfer stations, and the people collecting the waste—whether it's sent for disposal or recycling— they made an entirely reasonable request. What is not

reasonable is ignoring their concerns, and not being prepared to understand their front-line experiences and challenges.

Frankly, this was a huge missed opportunity to demonstrate to municipalities across Ontario that we are listening, that we understand how hard things are for them and that we must work together to find solutions. But most importantly, it would let them know that the respect we have for them goes beyond lip service. This government has to know that it's better to have a willing partner than an obstinate one. If any waste program is going to work in Ontario, we need everyone willing to do their part and to be ready, willing and eager to offer solutions.

They asked for amendments to section 11 of the Waste Diversion Transition Act and action on fair funding, but again were rebuffed. They needed your help regarding payments to municipalities from producers for the operation of the Blue Box Program. The current language is identical to a section in the Waste Diversion Act. If you recall, this same section was the subject of arbitration in 2014 between AMO and the city of Toronto and Stewardship Ontario.

Despite the municipal award, stewards continue to dispute the interpretation of this section. AMO further explored the standing committee to amend the language to clearly state that municipal governments should be paid the applicable percentage by producers for blue box services, based on the verified net cost of the program as determined through WDO.

We respectfully ask that you make sure that the section 11 language of the transition act is crystal clear and non-disputable by parties, when you report back to the Legislature. It's an ongoing concern, and they voiced the different reasons why this should be clear, so that there is not this ambiguity around these sections.

As you can see, Speaker, once again they were reminded that they indeed are not real partners in the eyes of this government. We continue to offer Ontario municipalities little to no options. They end up in the unfortunate position where they feel they must take legal action. It is entirely unfair to put our municipalities in a situation where the only action they can take is to leverage their homeowners' property taxes in legal disputes. All of this means that we are moving further and further away from our goals of sustainable consumption.

As far back as 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, recognized sustainable consumption and production as an overarching theme to link environmental and developmental challenges. Agenda 21 states that “the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production.” Speaker, that is something we also need to address when speaking to education and educating consumers—consumers of the environment. We need to talk about recycling much more than we have and about the compost issue as well.

I know that London talked about a green bin program. They're not implementing it at this point, but it is an on-

going concern. People have composters in their backyards, kind of like a balance between not having the green bin. But more and more we should be composting our waste. There's so much we can compost that's left behind. When we talk about sustainability and consumption, the piece that I think we really also need to focus on is the green bin and the composting of vegetation. I think that's a very strong piece in making a healthy way for people to reduce their waste.

Back to the UN meeting, Speaker, 10 years after, leaders from around the world signed the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Chapter 3 of the plan was devoted to changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, and declared "that fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development ... all countries should promote sustainable consumption and production patterns..." I think that is exactly what we should be talking about: all countries, all provinces, all cities. We need to make that advancement now. We can't continue to put it off. The environment can't wait.

Other countries around the world recognize that fundamental changes in the way societies consume and produce are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development. They adopted the 10-year framework of programs on sustainable consumption and production patterns.

But sadly, Speaker, we are nowhere near those levels of understanding and participation. These are bold ideas that transform how societies conceive of not merely their waste but their production. How unfortunate that in this House, we can't even hear the needs of our municipality partners or recognize that producers need to accept a greater level of responsibility.

When we talk about the environment, there's the consumer and there's the producer, and there's a government: Those three chains. Everyone has a role to play. We need to define and have clarity around the roles of producers. The more they produce heavier packaging, the more our landfills are being used. If we can encourage less packaging and even responsibility at the end of that—if there's a cost associated with the more packaging you have for a product, then there should be a cost to that as well for disposal at the end. Maybe that would be an incentive for producers to be more environmentally conscious when they talk about what they put—packaging around their items, their goods.

Producers have the best opportunity to redesign products and systems to eliminate waste. Assigning them full responsibility for the end-of-life management of their products is consistent with that principle.

It was my colleague from Toronto–Danforth, who has spoken very passionately on this bill, who suggested a provision in the act that allows municipalities to be the beneficiary of any penalties or fines for non-compliance. Unfortunately, it wasn't successful, as the government voted against that important amendment. We did fight at committee. I know the member from Toronto–Danforth

is very passionate about the environment. He is our critic for the environment and energy. This government, during committee, hasn't taken many of the amendments the NDP has proposed, and the proposals that we make actually make bills stronger.

I do have to give the government some credit. They did take some of our amendments and refurbished them for that purpose, but it is disappointing that they don't take them as they're presented, because they are strong amendments to these acts.

Frankly, it's very disappointing to know that if a producer ignores the law and frustrates it, flouts it, and the municipalities get stuck with the cost, then if there are penalties applied to that producer for their failure to comply with the law, it's the municipalities who pay the price. We have to have the responsibility borne on the producers. That's the vital flaw in this bill, and I am concerned about how that will play out in terms of costs to municipalities.

I know that my hometown of London is already struggling with the costs, and now that they are forced to take on this extra burden, it will be highly problematic for that. Again, I think the municipalities need to be treated fairly. They need to have access to these payments that are made when producers ignore the law. Municipalities, since I've been elected, have told us how they've been struggling financially, and to put this extra piece back to them as a responsibility is wholly unfair.

0920

Lastly, I want to address the role of the ministry in enforcement and compliance. The Canadian Environmental Law Association came to committee and delivered remarks saying, "We're ... recommending that compliance and enforcement should not be carried out by the new authority under Bill 151. Instead, Bill 151 should be amended to ensure that compliance and enforcement activities are conducted by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change."

Another quote continues: "In our view, Mr. Chairman, environmental enforcement is a core government function that should not be downloaded or outsourced to a third-party entity, especially one that lacks the enforcement track record, experience and resources of the ministry. Simply put, there is no evidence that delegating enforcement to the authority will result in better or more timely or more effective enforcement of the regulatory standards under Bill 151."

That would be another concern that's been brought forward at committee. It's very valid, because if you have legislation to do good—to do better—for the people of Ontario, but the enforcement piece isn't there, it's a very weak bill.

There are concerns about the definitions, that they weren't strong enough. There are concerns about enforcement. And there are concerns about putting costs back on municipalities that producers should be responsible for when they ultimately produce that excessive waste.

But saying that, this bill is something we are going to support. Environmental bills are very important to our

society today. I think the new approach to the environment is about reduce, reuse and recycle. This is in sync with that philosophy to some degree.

I'm glad I had the opportunity to give our comments on this bill and some of the things that we were concerned about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for her observations on Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act, and I want to thank our minister for bringing this piece of legislation forward.

Perhaps for those who are watching at home, some might wonder, "At what point does this type of legislation become unnecessary?" We've been talking about waste diversion in the province for a very long time, and while a great deal has been accomplished, I think what this legislation speaks to is the fact that there is still more work that needs to be done.

For me, personally, I think about it from my own personal experiences, remembering where we were maybe 15 or 20 years ago and where we've come—but also the work yet to be done.

I can think back to my time on municipal council in the city of Thunder Bay as a ward councillor representing Northwood ward for six years, from 1997 to 2003. One of the most contentious things that we dealt with during my term in those six years around waste diversion—just around the time a Blue Box Program was being started in the city of Thunder Bay—was how much garbage a person could put out on the curbside every week, if you can imagine. At that time in 1997, when I was elected, it was unlimited. You could put out 25, 30 bags, 30 cans; it didn't matter. I can remember when, as a council, we undertook that particular reduction. We first suggested going down to five and then down to three, and you would have thought the sky was falling. But ultimately that change was made and people came to accept it, and much waste was being diverted from the landfill.

Another great example would be what we're doing in the city of Thunder Bay with methane capture from our landfill, capturing that methane. I would say that project was supported with financing from the province of Ontario, from our government, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and turn that methane into electrical production to help the city of Thunder Bay.

There's work that's going on. There's more to be done. Much has been accomplished but there's still further to go.

I thank you for the time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to add my voice to the debate on Bill 151 today. If anyone was tuned in to the evolution of how Bill 151 came to be, we have to recognize, and the government needs to recognize, that Bill 151 is a marked improvement over its predecessor, Bill 91. Some may say, why was it improved? Because it embraced so much of what the PC Party of Ontario

brought forward in opposition to Bill 91. They learned from their mistakes with Bill 91 and they took good steps forward in this version of the Waste-Free Ontario Act.

In particular, I want to give my appreciation to the folks whom we worked with in terms of our briefings and in terms of bringing forward an environment where they were open to ideas. To that end, they were open to some amendments that strengthened Bill 151. It bodes well because, through the PC amendments in committee, we ensured that there is a finite timeline in which the ministry has to report back to the House with regard to eliminating eco-taxes. We don't need any more taxes in Ontario. We're pleased that the government agreed to identify a timeline in which they would phase out eco-taxes.

But as I said committee, we do reserve the right to watch over how this particular legislation evolves, because there are some worrisome parts. As we heard from stakeholders, we're concerned about how the authority is going to come forward. The minister selecting five individuals who then, in turn, bring on six more to the entire authority is a red flag, as is bureaucratic waste like the waste cops that this bill is going to introduce.

All in all, it's a marked improvement and we will be supporting it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'm happy to be here this morning listening to the words of the member for London-Fanshawe, who put a very big focus on how this will affect municipalities and some of the questions that they had.

I do want to give a shout-out to one of the communities in my area, Goulais River, a small community north of Sault Ste. Marie, that has taken the initiative in their community. The local services board has taken a huge step forward. They had a recycling program that was there and, unfortunately, the government funding that had been available to them to initiate this ran out. They went through the entire process of engaging with the community to have their recycling program reinstated, and they have. Congratulations to them. I know there are other communities in the Sault North area, such as Searchmont, that are going to be looking at it as well.

The member brought up some very good points in regard to how this affects the municipalities and some of the concerns they had. Here are a couple of concerns from AMO that they had:

- the lack of recognition of the integrated municipal waste system responsibilities now and in the future;

- no formal role for municipalities at the decision-making table in a future state impacts our waste system;

- language of the WDTA simply continues longstanding conflicts between municipalities, governments and stewards;

- no formal role for municipal governments in the transition of existing waste diversion programs;

- no recognition of full producer responsibility for designated products/packaging, no matter where the waste stream comes from; and

—last but not least, no principles for setting producer responsibility targets are outlined in this act.

Have some of those been addressed through the amendments and discussions on behalf of municipalities? I hate to tell you, Mr. Speaker, but no, they were not. The struggle will still continue and the downloading will be passed on to municipalities. This is definitely not something that we need.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm pleased to speak to Bill 151. This proposed legislation would help us divert more waste from landfills. As our Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry said, it would also help us reach our greenhouse gas reduction targets in the waste sector and it would boost the economy by creating the conditions to create more jobs, recover more resources and, as the Conference Board of Canada said, if we recover only 60% of the material, it would add \$1.5 billion to our GDP.

In short, I would like to say that this proposed legislation is good for the environment, it's good for our economy, it's good for the people of Ontario, it's good for municipalities, and it's good for the taxpayers. I'm very pleased to support this bill and I look forward to the speedy passage of this bill.

0930

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from London—Fanshawe for final comments.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I would like to thank the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the member from Huron—Bruce, the wonderful member from Algoma—Manitoulin and the member from Mississauga—Brampton South. We're all in agreement here. I think most people you can talk to are in agreement about the environment and that the environment is linked to our survival as people.

There's no disputing that finally this government has taken some action. This bill discussion started back in 2008. It is a long overdue bill and there are some good things in it; there's no disputing that. The member from Huron—Bruce commented on the evolution of the environment and where this bill is today. It's definitely a supportable bill. We voiced our concerns about the responsibilities that have been, like the member from Algoma—Manitoulin said, downloaded to the municipalities.

I wish those partnerships were stronger when it comes to the environment, because you would have much more vigorous participation and energy in getting the environment to where it needs to go. People would act quicker and they would act with positive attitudes. Always, when there are costs involved, people are trying to cut corners.

Environment: For sure we need to move forward. Is this a good bill? Yes, there's definitely an improvement. We look forward to supporting the bill. I look forward 10, 15 years, as time evolves, to this bill evolving with the environment so we can continue to make improvements for the health of our society.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure for me to join the debate this morning—surprisingly. I was waiting for a member from the opposite side to stand. But perhaps they have said all that needs to be said on the part of the government on this particular bill.

I want to start out by saying what a great job—

Hon. Michael Coteau: Maybe the member should realize that it wasn't us. It was your turn.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, is that right?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Yes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It goes from the NDP to the Liberals, I say to the minister. So would you like to correct your record?

Did you just get elected here, Michael? Sorry, I wanted you to know the procedure. It goes NDP—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since there seems to be a little bit of confusion, first of all, I just want to remind all members in the House that when referring to members, you refer to them by either their ministerial title or by their riding.

Secondly, the first call did go out for further debate. Looking towards the government side, there was no one standing. It then went over to the official opposition side.

You have the floor, sir. Please continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you for that clarification, Speaker. I'm sure the Minister of Culture will be pleased to have that clarification as well.

Anyway, first of all, I want to start out by—boy, they get sensitive over there right away. But I want to say we're going to support the bill.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Oh.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, we're going to support the bill. I want to thank my colleague from Huron—Bruce, Lisa Thompson, for doing such a tremendous job as our environmental critic, but also in helping to shepherd this bill through the House and making us as a caucus understand its ramifications much better than we would have otherwise. One of the reasons that we've decided we're going to support this bill is that it is a significant improvement over its previous iteration that came to this House in Bill 91.

The government learned, and one of the things it learned—they actually incorporated a significant amount of the input from the PC caucus, partly through our former environment critic, Michael Harris from Kitchener—Conestoga, and also the continued work of our member from Huron—Bruce.

That is a positive sign that maybe there is a glimmer of hope in this Legislature on the part of the Liberals actually starting to take notice and maybe listen a little bit to the opposition. But I say just a glimmer of hope, because every time I think there is this positive sign, I have my hopes dashed because of some other action on the part of the government, such as a time allocation motion where they bring the guillotine down on debate, or some other kind of overbearing action on the part of a

majority that continues to flex its muscles at the expense of the minority, and certainly at the expense of the people of the province of Ontario. But as I say, I'm an optimistic fellow, and I'm always hopeful that we'll find a better way of operating in this House.

Speaking of this House, it's interesting. I was at the 70th anniversary of the Rotary Club in Eganville on Sunday.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Eganville.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The great town of Eganville—village of Eganville, part of the now municipality of Bonnechere Valley.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Is Rooney's gone?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Rooney's is gone, I say to the former Minister of the Environment from St. Catharines and now the Minister without Portfolio, but not without opinion. I say to the former Minister of the Environment, yes, Rooney's hotel burned down several years ago. I certainly—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Were you ever there?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I was definitely at Rooney's hotel more than once. But we're off the subject. Back to Eganville: The master of ceremonies introduces me, and he's talking about the fact that I work here at Queen's Park. He says, "I want to show Mr. Yakabuski a map of the central part of Toronto from"—it was 18-something, prior to Confederation. He shows the people where Queen's Park is and everything. Then he says, "Now I want to give you a magnified version," and it shows where the caption is right next to the Legislative Assembly building, where it would be: "temporary lunatic asylum." That's part of what was here on the grounds of Queen's Park at that time. I told the crowd that the only thing that has changed is that it has now become permanent. That's what it seems like here in this chamber sometimes, in the context of debate.

Hon. Michael Coteau: That is so awful.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's terrible, yes.

It's become permanent, and I had to get back to work, head back on Sunday evening because my room was waiting.

But back to the bill: a little history on waste diversion, which today is probably one of the most significant—certainly for rural municipalities like ours, where we don't have big budgets, it's become one of the biggest budget line items for the municipality, the handling of waste.

I remember when we moved to the house that I live in today. When we moved there in 1960, it was quite a different world.

Mr. Steve Clark: That's the year I was born.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That's the year that my colleague from Leeds–Grenville was born. You mean I'm older than you?

So in 1960, garbage pickup was only beginning in the village of Barry's Bay, but when you went down behind our home to the ravine—there was a ravine—there was all kinds of stuff down in that ravine: old cans and wine bottles and all kinds of that kind of stuff. People didn't

even go to the—they didn't even have a landfill. Everybody had a landfill in their backyard. That's where some of that stuff was actually just thrown, down over the edge of the ravine.

How things have changed. I can't get it figured out. We've got a chart in the house today as to what's going to be picked up on Monday, what's going to be picked up on Tuesday, Wednesday, every second week Thursday, every week in the summertime, every second week in the wintertime. So you have to have this schedule on the fridge or somewhere in the house so that you know, at 6 o'clock in the morning, which buckets have to be out there, because recycling is picked up every week but not the same recycling. One week it might be paper. The next week it's plastic or maybe cans.

0940

It's like you get up in the morning—I have to say, and I hope that I don't get into trouble over this, that I've got to admit I'm not the one putting it out, ever, if very often. I really haven't got much to do with it, so maybe I shouldn't be talking about it because I am probably going to get myself in trouble. But I know that on occasion, at 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning, the recycling buckets are still there and everything is still in them. Then my wife will say, "Oh, it's paper week and I put out the cans." It's confusing sometimes, because there's so many different ways of managing the waste stream today that just didn't exist years and years ago. So that's a little bit on the personal side about how important it's become.

It's not like this government just invented recycling. In fact, I may be wrong—I know somebody said that the Liberals claimed they brought out the Blue Box Program, but I believe it was the Conservatives that instituted—

Hon. James J. Bradley: I won an award.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The original Blue Box Program came from the Conservatives, but the member from St. Catharines may want to dispute that.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Province-wide.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, province-wide. Oh, the Liberals made it province-wide, but they didn't invent the program. You know, when Henry Ford first brought out the car, not everybody got one the next week. It was the Conservatives who brought out the Blue Box Program and perhaps the Liberals expanded on it. Well, whoop-de-do. Once you put a man on the moon, it wasn't that hard to get the second one there. Good Lord, they would take the credit for everything. They want to take the credit for everything.

Anyway, it was the Conservatives who brought out the Blue Box Program. They're the ones who instituted the program here in the province of Ontario. In fact, it was the Conservatives who first brought out a Ministry of the Environment. And we take a lot of flak from people on the other side. The Liberals like to portray themselves as the champions of the environment, the ones that have made protecting the environment their life story, their reason for being here. But it was the provincial PC Party that brought out the Ministry of the Environment, because they recognized that if we are going to live in a

prosperous province that affords everyone the opportunity to be successful, then we've got to take care of Mother Earth as well. We've got to make sure the environment we're living in is one that we prioritize as requiring our protection, and not just our use, not just our enjoyment. Should we enjoy the environment? Absolutely. But we've got to make sure that we're taking the necessary steps to protect that environment as well.

We've got state-of-the-art environmental facilities in my riding. I look at the Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre. When it was first being planned, a lot of people said, "Oh, this isn't going to work." This is a marvellous, marvellous example of reducing waste in the waste stream. We're way ahead of the provincial average, for the municipalities that participate in the Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre—way ahead.

In fact—and you know me; I'm not very often that critical of the government, but from time to time I have to be—let's just talk about waste diversion. I recall that in 2003, the former member for Prince Edward—Hastings—it might have been called something else at that time—Leona Dombrowsky, was the new environment minister. She promised a 60% diversion rate, I think, by 2008, somewhere around there. Our waste diversion rate in the province of Ontario today is no better than it was when the Liberals took office. They brought out a whole cadre of programs, but they haven't been successful. I think they have to take responsibility for that.

We all recall the fiasco surrounding eco taxes. Do you remember that, Speaker? Remember that summer when the eco taxes hit the airwaves and people just went apoplectic? One of the ones that was the best example of something gone awry was a bag of ready-mix cement. The eco taxes on a bag of ready-mix cement amounted to more money than the bag of cement itself. It was a 66-pound—30 kilograms—bag of cement. The cement itself was less expensive than the eco taxes.

If you made concrete out of that bag of cement—let's say it was ready-mix concrete—where was that going once that hardened up and was used as an anchor or some kind of a post or whatever small amount of concrete? Yet the eco taxes were more expensive than the product itself.

The whole program made no sense. But what does make sense—and the PCs need to take credit for this, as well as the other stakeholders out there who told them this eco tax madness was just that, madness. They are phasing these things out and they have committed to a timetable, and that's something everybody wants to see and support.

When it comes to protecting the environment, nobody has a monopoly on the right ideas and nobody should be castigated as being the villain in this discussion either. I believe that every member of this assembly is absolutely committed to protecting our environment.

At the end of the day, I'm probably not going to leave my children a lot of money unless they do something to enhance the retirement package for MPPs in this House, but probably not a lot of money. I hope I'm going to

leave them a reasonably good name, but what I have to make sure that I have done right is that I've done everything that I can do to leave the earth and our environment, both locally and globally, in a better condition than in which we found it.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: What's that?

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: My colleague from Haliburton.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Does that mean blue box or green box?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm not sure what box she's referring to right now. Is it the recycling box or is it the box that I'm going to leave this world in? I'm assuring her of one thing: There will be no interest in recycling me once I'm done. There will be no interest in that.

But it is our responsibility as legislators to make sure we leave this earth in a better condition than in which we found it. I think we all take that responsibility seriously so that our children and our grandchildren will pick up on that.

The one thing that I will say is that the children of today—look, when I was growing up in school, there was no education. I mean, we had common sense. Thank goodness we had common sense. I'll tell you a little bit about that common sense—and you knew what was right and wrong.

I'll tell you a story about my son, Lucas, who is going to be 25 in July. Just little things: When he was a little boy and he would be in school or whatever and have maybe some candy wrappers or whatever, there was no way those candy wrappers would ever be thrown on the ground. He knew that was the wrong thing to do. They went into his pocket. When he would come home from school or wherever he was, whenever we were doing the laundry we would find wrappers—I wasn't doing the laundry either—and stuff like that in his pants pockets.

One Sunday afternoon, my wife was taking Lucas and another boy down to the corner store in Eganville for some ice cream and some treats. When they were coming back from the store, back to her mother's, she turned around and Lucas and the other boy were some space behind her and Lucas was having this discussion with the other boy.

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Vicky walks back, wondering what's going on, and Lucas was telling him he had to pick up that paper that he threw on the ground because that's not what you do with paper. They had paper from some of the candies, and he just threw it on the ground, and Lucas was challenging him on that, saying, "No, you've got to pick that up and take that back to Grandma's house and put it in the garbage." That's not only good responsibility, but it's common sense. It's one of my biggest pet peeves, and maybe he picked that up a little bit.

I just can't stand it when I'm driving down the highway and I see somebody throw something out the window, garbage on the highways, or anywhere else, whether it's on a golf course—I go out and play golf

sometimes, and on a golf course there are waste cans at every tee box, but then you drive and you see beer cans and crap thrown along the cart paths. There's no reason for that whatsoever. That's why everybody has to take individual responsibility, as well, to do their part. I always say that if you can carry something to wherever you were using it, then you can carry the empty back to wherever the proper place for disposal is. That's something we all need to take seriously.

I've almost gotten into more than an argument, on occasion, over people littering. I take that very seriously. I've actually pulled somebody over at the next stoplight, when I saw them throw garbage out the window of their vehicle, and have had heated discussions with them over that kind of practice. There's no room for that in this world. Everybody needs to take that responsibility seriously.

If we all do our part, and government does its part, and opposition does its part, we'll all have this bill—and we're going to have this bill shortly. It's going to strengthen our waste diversion here in the province of Ontario. That's a good thing. At some point we need to change the mindset about packaging and all that, but that's a discussion for another day. Maybe we'll have that another time.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak this morning, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to comment on the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke's comments on Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act. I would like to say, to his point, that while people might not have an interest in recycling him, we certainly have an interest in hearing his comments, and we might recycle some of his lines, so it isn't all for naught.

His point that our job here as legislators and, really, as citizens of Ontario is to leave the world in a better condition than we found it in is something that we do need to carry forward in our day to day, whether that is, like his son Lucas, taking our candy wrappers home with us or to the next garbage can and not leaving them as we're walking. I think our children know that. We need to remember that.

I remember being a child not that long ago—although when I do the math, it's getting up there—and I remember some of the campaigns. When you're young, there are catchy slogans that you remember: reduce, reuse, recycle. It's interesting when we think about reduce, reuse, recycle. As consumers, the message was for us, but, now, as we see packaging and industry growing and we see a consumer-driven society, a waste-driven society, the onus of reducing, reusing and recycling really does now fall to the producers as well, and needs to. They need to reduce their packaging and wasteful materials. We see more targeted recycling programs, whether it's at stores that allow you to bring your electronics, batteries or appliances back—to have these recycling programs is an important piece as well.

I'm realizing it was almost 30 years ago, when I was living in Palgrave, that the region of Peel had compost bins that families could get, whether for free or for a low cost, and I remember that it was my job and my brother's job to take the waste out to the compost bin. My brother loved it as a wildlife preserve.

Anyway, we see that we can encourage this behaviour in our families from the beginning.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I am delighted to respond to what is always an entertaining intervention by the member from Barry's Bay, among other places. If I want to follow what is happening in his riding, I can read the Eganville Leader. He is found in the Eganville Leader second only to the federal member, Cheryl Gallant, who seems to be very active in the riding.

By the way, I had a chance, when I was Minister of the Environment, to visit the riding, and I was welcomed by the member very warmly. We were at a waste management facility at the time with the good local folks. I thought it was a very good day. Again, the federal member, Cheryl Gallant, showed up at this particular event. I don't recall that it had anything to do with the federal government, but nevertheless she was there with the member, I'm sure to support him in supporting the government of the day.

I had the opportunity to serve with the member's father, Paul Yakabuski, in this House a number of years ago as well, so I appreciate his interventions when they are here.

I'm glad to see that the Conservative Party is now supporting this. The road to Damascus is very crowded now with people who are getting on the environmental bandwagon. I even see that at the convention in Vancouver there were some converts to environmentalism.

I want to point out to the member, by the way—he mentioned Henry Ford inventing the car. I don't think Henry Ford actually invented the car. What he invented was the assembly line, just as the city of Mississauga invented the Blue Box Program. Then the province of Ontario, under the Peterson government, made it a province-wide program. There's a direct parallel in that particular case.

I am pleased to see that this bill is finally going to proceed, that there's going to be joy amongst a consensus of the people right across this province. I thank the member for his timely intervention.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I want to congratulate my colleague and friend from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke because he always brings a unique perspective to the debate. I appreciate very much how he took time to demonstrate to the people here in the House how the PCs have always—always—held the environment as a priority. We've been walking by example in what we have done through the decades. I appreciated him pointing that out, very much so.

Specifically with regard to Bill 151, while we reserve the right to put the government on notice, saying we're going to be watching the evolution of this legislation, I feel at this time I should share a few flags, some concerns from stakeholders who have come forward saying they're a little concerned about all these policy statements that could come forward at the minister's discretion.

Again, we want accountability; we want transparency. When there's so much power put in the hands of one person—and currently, that one person who holds the minister role in terms of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has proven himself to be a little reckless from time to time, not only with his comments but the direction in which he has tried to steer his caucus and government. We issue a warning flag in that regard. We cannot afford to move forward in Ontario with some comprehensive plans, all while the leadership takes a left turn and goes off script and causes a lot of concern for stakeholders. That's just another warning flag that we have with regard to putting so much power into the hands of one person.

But overall, Bill 151 is a marked improvement because of the embracing of many good ideas coming from the PC Party of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's always a pleasure to rise and bring the voice of my constituents from Windsor West to any debate that we're having.

Today we're debating Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act, which I've had the pleasure of speaking to several times. Today I get to talk about some of the things the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke touched on.

It's never been my goal to have to follow the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I don't know how you follow a member who is so passionate and so animated when he speaks. I'm sure I'm not quite as entertaining as he is.

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Several members have touched on education and how we need to make sure that people understand reduce, reuse and recycle, so I'm going to talk about that. I'm going to talk about my own home and how shocking it is when I look at how much recycling we have compared to how much garbage goes out to the curb for collection. People would think that's a good thing, but I marvel at how much—here's free advertising: We have one of the large Herby Curbys—if you don't have one, you should probably go get one; they're fantastic—and it's overflowing all the time.

It amazes me how much prepackaged food there is out there. Clearly, we buy too much of it. It's getting harder and harder to stick to food that isn't prepackaged. Dietitians will tell you to stick to the outside perimeters of the grocery stores for the healthy foods, but more and more of that has become prepackaged produce and other things. So it's becoming very difficult to buy things that aren't prepackaged, and the result of that is more and

more people, if they are choosing to recycle—and I certainly hope they are—will find that their recycle bins are overflowing. We have a Herby Curby and we also have a blue box for the overflow. I think it's incumbent on the producers to be looking at how to reduce packaging so that when they do make it into the households, and the consumers are using it, there are fewer and fewer items that have to be used for recycling or garbage.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for his final comments.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I appreciate the comments of the member from Oshawa, the member from St. Catharines, the member from Huron–Bruce and the member from Windsor West.

I did misspeak when I said that Henry Ford invented the car. I know that that's not accurate. He did invent the assembly line. I was really thinking of the Model T; it popularized the Model T. But I am at a disadvantage to the member from St. Catharines because, probably, he actually drove a Model T here when he first got elected to the assembly, so he's had that personal history of driving one of Henry Ford's pride and joys.

But back to the issue: We can all kibitz around and have a little fun on this sometimes, but the importance of the environment cannot be overstated. Governments at all levels, regardless of which party is in power, have recognized that it is a priority ministry no matter which jurisdiction or what government or party is in power.

We all are taking the steps that we can. This bill is a positive step. We recognize that it has a much more common-sense approach in it than its previous son, Bill 91, and a lot of that is because of the suggestions made by the PC caucus and the PC environment critics, both Michael Harris and Lisa Thompson. When we're done this, when this bill passes, we'll be in a better position than we are today.

To all of the comments, waste diversion is something that is not going to become a smaller problem; it's going to become a bigger problem. We have to continue to find ways to reduce the amount that goes into our landfills. We can't invent more land, so we'd better start inventing less waste. No more land, so let's make less waste.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I notice that there's a number of members from the Sikh community in the galleries. I want to extend my invitation and my welcome to them, and in the members' gallery as well.

I'm also honoured to join the debate on Bill 151. First and foremost, let's make it clear that New Democrats support this bill. We support initiatives to reduce waste. There are a number of issues, obviously, with the bill, but let's first and foremost address the overall concern and the reason why we support it.

In our society, and we've heard a number of members talk about this, we have a very serious responsibility now. We are at a turning point in our society where we really need to look at how we can, in earnest, take care of our environment and protect our environment.

The member from Nipissing talked about how we need to protect Mother Earth. Our members from the New Democratic Party talked about how important it is to ensure we reduce waste. There's a connection between waste and climate change. There's a connection between the increased amount of waste we're producing and the negative impact that waste production has on our environment. That connection is absolutely clear.

Reducing waste on a practical level, in the sense that we don't have an unlimited source of land to put that waste, is important. But in addition, the extended impact is that increased waste in our system, in our society, wherever it ends up, whether it's in landfills, whether it's in the water—the waste that is produced will negatively impact our environment. And it has impacted our environment in a negative manner, and there's clear evidence to support that.

We need to be doing as much as possible. We need to be doing everything we can to ensure we move away from the previous way of thinking, which was that there's limitless land, we can produce limitless waste, and it's not going to have an impact because this world is so big. We're learning more and more, and this world is becoming smaller and smaller on many levels: economically, with global trade, but also with the fact that we're seeing the impact of the production of waste and the human impact on our environment, and it's real. We need to address that. So that's a positive thing.

The other main element of this bill that I want to highlight as being an absolutely positive step is the idea of ensuring that the individual producer has responsibility for the end of life of products produced. That general concept of individual producer responsibility is absolutely a very positive step in the right direction. It allows the producer the opportunity that they actually are making sure the product that they're designing has a concern about the end of life. They're looking at ways to ensure that their product is not only something that they can market effectively but also, at the end of life, is not something that's going to become a waste or a burden on society. That's a very important step.

Now, some of the concerns about the initiative: One is, the bill itself is named the Waste-Free Ontario Act. That's obviously a very positive name. We want to move towards a society where there is absolutely no waste. We also want to move to a society that ensures there's a circular economy, that if there is any produce or any sort of product left behind at the end of use, that can be reused in a way that does not create waste, that it's reused in a circular manner.

However, the issue that I have with the bill is that, despite the title, there isn't actually a clear, legislated goal of a waste-free Ontario. It sounds great as a title, and it's something that in fact New Democrats support as an initiative and as a vision, but the bill doesn't actually have a concrete goal set where it says that you must create a waste-free system. It does not have that requirement, and that is a problem. As a vision, obviously, it's something absolutely important and I'm glad that it's

been raised, but we need to ensure that our bills are reflecting what they're actually doing. In this case, the bill does not achieve that goal. This is an area where the government could ensure that the legislation matches the title, and actually has set concrete goals and objectives that are actually designed to say, "Yes, we want this target to be achieved by a certain time, so that we do indeed have this waste-free Ontario." So that's a concern, that it's not there.

Again, with the individual producer responsibility, one of the things that is absolutely important is that it allows the producer to come up with creative ways to reduce waste. That's something where we look forward to seeing the innovation. Some of the other members have said, in effect, when we talk about what we do with waste, we hear the three Rs all the time: reduce, reuse, recycle. They're in that order for a reason. I think it's important to highlight this.

The most important thing we can do—we think about waste and we always think about, "Let's recycle more. Let's encourage more recycling." Recycling is absolutely important. But the first R is reduce, and that's why it is the first: because it's the most important. We need to ensure that in the beginning of the process, we're reducing waste, so that it's not a matter of always looking towards how we can reuse the waste that we've generated. We need to ensure that producers are looking at how they can reduce waste in the first place.

There are a lot of strategies around that and we really need to look at some serious solutions. There are many areas of packaging that I'm sure—when we look at the product ourselves, we think, "Why is there so much packaging? It's so unnecessary." There's ways to look at—instead of packaging items for individual use, in a way that's to be discarded, looking at ways that the consumer can actually have an item they can bring into the store and refill. That idea of using their own materials to refill, using their own receptacles to refill, is something that the producers could look to creative ways of marketing so that they can encourage people to bring back that same item that was sold and it could be the item that they put the new product in. These are ideas that I'm hoping producers are going to look at in terms of their strategy.

1010

The initial point that I started with was the connection between waste production and climate change. I just want to quote Environmental Defence and the Toronto Environmental Alliance. They support the bill, and I want to highlight their comments, both from Environmental Defence and the Toronto Environmental Alliance:

"We welcome the Strategy for a Waste-Free Ontario and are very pleased to see Ontario making the explicit link between waste and climate change and committing to a vision for a circular economy where Ontario produces zero waste."

They acknowledge and are pleased with this connection. I also want to reiterate that it's absolutely important to connect waste and climate change.

Where I also agree is this vision for a circular economy. Again, I implore the government: Let's move from

just a vision to a concrete plan for a waste-free Ontario; let's move beyond simply a plan to concrete, objective criteria to actually set targets so that we can achieve that goal. So that's reiterating that concern.

With respect to other elements of the bill that I have some concerns with, the bill suggests the creation of a new delegated administrative authority. One of the concerns I have is that any time we create a delegated administrative authority, there are concerns around accountability. When you create an arm's-length-from-the-government entity, there are always concerns about how the government can continue to provide oversight over this entity, which is essentially only in existence because of the government's mandate. We've seen in other circumstances—not exactly the same, but where we have administrative authorities, the government doesn't have the same ability to ensure that they're actually doing the job they were supposed to do, that they set out to do, that they were mandated to do.

One example—something similar, but not exactly the same—is with respect to Tarion. Tarion is an arm's-length entity. It's not directly under the ministry or any particular ministry, but it exists solely because this government has created a mandate that this is the only new home warranty system in the province. When you have a system like that, what happens is consumers are required to purchase their home warranty through this one entity. So their entire funding is based on the people of Ontario purchasing it. But when it comes to the concerns that the consumer raises—if someone buys a home and says, "Listen, this home warranty program is not working very well. They're actually rejecting claims time and time again," there is really no recourse. Right now, people complain, and they don't have a way to seek a remedy.

Similarly, if we have a delegated administrative authority in this case and there are concerns about the way it's operating, the way it's developing policies, the way it's administering, we don't know if the government will be able to provide the necessary oversight. We have other examples where it hasn't worked, so that's why it's important to look to other examples and say, listen, if it hasn't worked in this case, maybe it won't work in the current example, when it comes to this waste management issue.

I raise that concern because there have been a number of other delegated administrative authorities that have shown to be not the most effective way of delivering the service, but more importantly have had serious problems with respect to oversight, transparency and accountability. So that's an area of concern that I have.

The bill lists a number of provincial interests that will guide the way and the manner in which the rollout of the strategy will happen. The strategy will be guided by these provincial interests and, ideally, the way the producer creates new strategies or new solutions will be guided by these principles. These principles are very positive, and I want to highlight some of them: minimizing greenhouse gas emissions; minimizing waste generation; increasing

the durability, reusability and recyclability of products and packaging; holding those responsible for the design of products and packaging responsible for their end-of-life management; reducing hazardous and toxic materials in products and packaging; minimizing the need for waste disposal; plus "any other related thing that may be prescribed."

Those provincial interests are indeed something positive.

I understand that time is just about winding down, so I'll just wrap up by saying that the bill has some very positive elements. It's very important for us to move toward a society that reduces waste, and I'm encouraged by the bill. There are certainly some issues we can address, but we'll absolutely be supporting the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Just to the member, you will have time when this bill is called again to complete your debate.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is now 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before we move into introduction of guests, I will be introducing our guests for the tribute today, including former members.

So with us today, not as part of the tribute but somebody who is here as well, is the former member from Ottawa West—Nepean in the 38th and 39th Parliaments, Mr. Jim Watson. Thank you, Jim.

Now it's time for introduction of guests.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I'm certain we all welcome the cattlemen here today. It's a day that we look forward to. Don't miss the barbecue at noon.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to introduce the family of page captain Emily Dale: her parents, Julie Dale and Steve Dale; her sister Megan; and her brother Cameron. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Jeff Leal: It's a great honour for me to introduce, in the members' east gallery today, Mr. Matt Bowman, who is president of the Beef Farmers of Ontario; Mr. Joe Hill, vice-president of the Beef Farmers of Ontario; and two people from the great riding of Peterborough who are very good friends of mine, Garnet Toms, who is a director, and Dave Cavanagh, who is a director. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I too wish to welcome Joe Hill and also Dave Stewart from the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, who are here today, as well as my constituent Terry Mundell from the Greater Toronto Hotel Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I'm very happy to welcome the students and staff of Beaver Brae Secondary School from Kenora to Queen's Park. I'd also like to give a special welcome to Sheena Wheeler, who is a teacher at Beaver Brae and a former page of the Ontario Legislature. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Coteau: We have some visitors from the Greater Toronto Hotel Association in the House this morning: Terry Mundell, president and CEO of the GTHA; David Kelley, chair of the board; and Edwin Frizzell, executive committee member. I'd like to welcome them to the Legislature and also remind all members here today that there's a reception here this evening. Thank you very much for joining us today.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Obviously, I would like to add my voice in welcoming my mayor, Jim Watson, here, and also Councillor Catherine McKenney; her daughter Kenney; my husband, Joe; and my daughter, Victoria. Ottawa is taking over Queen's Park today, if we haven't already done it, sir.

Mr. John Vanthof: I would also like to welcome the Beef Farmers of Ontario here today, and my constituent, the president of Beef Farmers of Ontario, Matt Bowman.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Only five Canadian productions have ever made it to Broadway. I'm pleased today to introduce Irene Sankoff and David Hein, the producers of *Come From Away*, and Michael Rubinoff, who is the associate dean of the department of visual and performing arts at Sheridan College. Speaker, please welcome them to Queen's Park. They're opening on Broadway in 2017.

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to introduce a number of the members from the Punjabi Sikh community here for question period today: Balinder Singh Badesha, Manjit Singh Grewal from the Malton gurdwara, Bikram Singh Bal, Jas Dhadda, Harjit Jaswal, Pam Hundal, Gulab Saini, and others from the Sikh Motorcycle Club who are here today. Welcome, all.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like all members of the House to acknowledge a very special occasion, a very special day on his birthday today. He is sitting in the underpress, one of our staff from the whip, Brendan McClughan. Happy birthday, Brendan.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to welcome Ms. Cheung's grade 8 class from Westwood Middle School. To the students, welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Today is World No Tobacco Day and we are celebrating that. We're also celebrating the 10th anniversary of smoke-free Ontario here in the Legislature later today at Queen's Park. We're doing that by giving out 10 Heather Crowe Smoke-Free Ontario Awards. The ceremony will take place right after question period in room 228. I ask everybody to attend.

More importantly, we have a number of special guests who have travelled from across Ontario to attend the Heather Crowe Smoke-Free Ontario Awards. I'd like to introduce them once again: the honourable Jim Watson, the mayor of Ottawa; Will Bulmer, city of Ottawa; from the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Cristin Napier, Jeffrey Li and Maha Sohail; from the Ontario Lung Association, Ledja Peci, Peter Glazier, Sherry Zarins, Chris Yaccato and Andrea Stevens Lavigne; and the award recipients, Ted Boadway, Vito Chiefari, Jane Ling, the city of Hamilton board of health, Porcupine Gold Mines, Ontario Finnish Resthome Association, Ottawa Model for Smok-

ing Cessation, Simon Hoad, Mary Ransom and Jenny Schiff.

We welcome you all. We thank you for your contributions. We look forward to honouring you and everybody—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to introduce Rob Lipsett, a member of the Beef Farmers of Ontario, from the great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and the son of former MPP Ron Lipsett.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to welcome Kelci Gershon, who is the aunt of page Nava Wu. Welcome.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to welcome a very hard-working constituent of mine from Ottawa Centre. Please welcome Will Bulmer from Old Ottawa East. Welcome to Queen's Park, Will.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like to introduce my intern Christian Petit-frère, originaire de Haïti, qui a été pris dans le tremblement de terre, qui est venu rejoindre sa famille ici à Toronto et qui maintenant étudie en droit à l'Université d'Ottawa.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce a constituent of mine, Mr. Tom Wilson, a director of the Beef Farmers of Ontario. Welcome here to Queen's Park today.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Our page Katelyn is joined today by somebody very important in her life: her grandfather Francis Recagno is here at Queen's Park today. Please give him a warm welcome.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At this time, I would ask all members to join me in welcoming our pages. Our new pages are here and we're going to introduce them. Please assemble.

From Halton, Alexandra Wu; from Mississauga–Brampton South, Alina Saleh; from Parkdale–High Park, Ariane Parent; from Peterborough, Claire Williams; from Sudbury, Colleen Gauvreau; from Etobicoke Centre, Daniel Smart-Reed; from Pickering–Scarborough East, Daniel Zung; from Toronto–Danforth, Emily Dale; from Willowdale, Emma Zhou; from Markham–Unionville, Huzaifah Muhammad; from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, Jacob Rudolph; from Mississauga South, Julia Michaud; from Oakville, Katelyn Recagno; from Davenport, Lianhao Qu; from Welland, Mélina Dubé; from Scarborough Centre, Nadine Elsaddig; from Eglinton–Lawrence, Nava Wu; from Brampton West, Sahil Bhagat; from Scarborough Southwest, Sulin Fletcher; from Haldimand–Norfolk, Thomas Rickus; and from Oak Ridges–Markham, Waleed Malik.

These are our pages for this couple of weeks.

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VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, for introductions.

Hon. David Zimmer: It's my honour to recognize page captain Emma Zhou from Willowdale. Her mother, Maggie, is here, and her father, William, and her brother, Daniel. Welcome to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would the members please join me in welcoming the families and friends of the late Michael Murray Dietsch, MPP for St. Catharines–Brock during the 34th Parliament, who are seated in the Speaker's gallery: his wife, Gail; his sons Michael, Matthew and his wife, Kristen; and Paul and his wife, Natasha; his daughters Patricia Tebbutt, Jody Golding; and Linda Dietsch-Bird and her husband, David; his grandchildren Bram, Melissa, Sean, Tyler, Liam, Kaleb, Austin, Nolan and Leah; and many friends. We welcome you to the tribute. Thank you for being here.

Also in the Speaker's gallery for the tribute is the former member from Brantford in the 34th parliament, my grade 12 world politics teacher, Mr. David Neumann.

MICHAEL DIETSCH

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would call upon the government House leader for a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to Michael Murray Dietsch, former member for St. Catharines–Brock, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to pay tribute. Do we agree? Agreed.

I'll call upon the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook.]

Mr. Tim Hudak: If Tip O'Neill once said, "All politics is local," then Mike Dietsch lived it. He and his wife, Gail, were still busy raising their six kids—Pat, Linda, Jody, Mike, Paul and Matthew—when he decided to run for provincial office as the MPP for the riding of St. Catharines–Brock in 1987. Mike successfully ran for the Liberals as part of a Peterson government sweep.

But when Mike told Gail that he wanted to run for the nomination provincially, Gail was terrified. Gail was an army brat. She and Mike actually met when her dad, Chief Warrant Officer William Bowman, ran the army camp in Niagara-on-the-Lake and Mike worked there. She says her dad wasn't too happy with the crowd she ran around with in Hamilton—those from Niagara can understand that about Hamilton—so he liked Mike.

So they had been raising six kids. She loved living in the country, and Mike was an automotive worker and a farmer, and they loved being at home with the family. So Gail wondered—a lot—if being here at Queen's Park in the Legislature and being in Toronto was going to change them and change their family. Even friends and neighbours wondered, if Mike were elected, how the Dietsch family might no longer be the ordinary folks that they loved spending time with. But when Mike Dietsch made up his mind, he stuck to it, and Gail fully supported him.

Knowing Mike as I did—I knew him for his municipal politics—I knew full well that nothing would change. Mike always said, "I am who I am," and assured Gail they'd always stay grounded—so grounded, in fact, that Gail kept her job in Niagara-on-the-Lake, driving a school bus. When Mike was off at Queen's Park, she loved working with the kids. Friends and neighbours would ask, incredulously, "Now with Mike elected, you're not still driving a bus, are you?" She said, "Of course I am. I love it. I'm a part of the community."

And local pays off. In the nomination in 1987, people saw the writing on the wall. The Liberals were on the move, and it was a big contest: five contestants in the nomination, and a lot of big names. Truth be told, folks thought Mike would be lucky to come in fourth in that race. But he actually went door to door during the nomination and met with the members, and he built a team. He divvied up the lists of memberships between husband-and-wife pairs and had them go together as well, knocking door to door on his behalf.

Because of his local reputation and dedication, and because of his approach and hard work, he actually came first on the first ballot and stayed first all the way through to win that nomination. He defied the odds through good old-fashioned hard work and a smart game plan. He applied the same smarts and work ethic in the general election, visiting 19,000 homes during that campaign. He was feeling confident on election night with good reason. He actually beat former MPP and future regional chair Peter Partington. That was no easy contest.

So no surprise, when Mike arrived here in 1987, he fully threw himself into the work, but he never forgot about the folks back home. He brought forward three private members' bills that made a huge difference—actually, he not only brought them forward but had each of them pass, Speaker, and all to do with the grape and wine industry. Any of us from Niagara, Prince Edward county, the Lake Erie north shore and across the province know the importance of that industry. His three bills resulted in the allowance of credit card sales at wineries, Sunday openings at wineries and an irrigation bill to allow farmers to use irrigation ditches to water their crops—so way ahead of his time. Back in the early 1990s, late 1980s, there was a small number of wineries, and he helped build a successful sector that adds millions and millions of dollars to our economy each and every year.

Ironically, I found out, though, Speaker, that once he arrived in 1987, Mike stopped drinking altogether—not even wine. He felt he should focus fully on his work. Even at home, Christmas dinners, out for dinner with the family, he wanted to focus on his job. But even though Mike didn't have any wine, whenever he went out for dinner with Gail, the family or anybody else, he demanded to see the wine lists. He'd call the sommelier over or the head waiter, and if there wasn't Ontario wine on that list, they heard about it. Then, come Monday morning, he'd follow up with a letter back to the restaurant and all of the wineries—there were only seven back then in

Niagara-on-the-Lake; he called them the group of seven—and told them that this would be an outstanding establishment to show off their product. No wonder he earned himself the nickname “the Winer” around here at Queen’s Park—no H of course.

As much as Mike felt it was his duty to give back to his community, his leadership was very well respected by all the work he did and those he worked with, his constituents, but never at the expense of his family. He always had time for his kids, despite the demanding schedule and the travel back and forth to Toronto. When three of the kids played lacrosse one summer, Mike and Gail just packed up the whole family and spent their summer holidays camping at the lacrosse tournaments across our province, ensuring the whole family spent quality time together despite the hectic schedule.

One year, they took all eight family members in a crew cab truck and drove across Canada—seven weeks of that, packed in there with the kids. Gail said that was the only other time in her life she was terrified with one of Mike’s decisions. He valued family ahead of everything else, and I’m sure his wife of 52 years, Gail, his six kids and his 17 grandchildren deeply feel his absence today, but no doubt his grandchildren are enormously proud of what their grandpa stood for, what he accomplished for the folks back home and that he never, ever lost sight of that old adage, “Dance with the one who bring ya.”

It’s an honour to pay tribute to Mike Dietsch and all he accomplished for our province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute?

Mr. Wayne Gates: It’s an honour and privilege for me to rise and say a few words about former MPP for St. Catharines–Brock Michael Dietsch, who was an auto-worker, just like myself.

I’d like to thank his wife, Gail; his sons, Matt, Paul and Michael; his daughters, Pat, Linda and Jody and all his many grandchildren for being here today.

Some of you may wonder why I’m rising to speak about an MPP from an area called St. Catharines–Brock. In 1987, this was actually a riding that existed in Niagara and, despite its name, contained the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, which today is in my riding.

When talking about Mike, you will see that despite the name of the riding, MPP Mike was a man who cared deeply for Niagara-on-the-Lake and worked very hard on behalf of the people of the town.

Former Lord Mayor Dave Eke said that he was committed to his family, to his community and to the people he represented.

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During his three years here in the Legislature, he managed to do something that I think most of us would be shocked to hear: He managed to pass three private member’s bills. The MPPs who are here today are happy if we get one. If anyone had any doubt that Mr. Dietsch stood up for the people and the businesses of Niagara-on-the-Lake, let me read out to you briefly what these bills were about:

—first, a bill to allow credit card sales at wineries;

—second, a bill to allow wineries to open on Sunday;

—third, and equally important, a bill that would allow farmers to use irrigation ditches to water their crops.

Looking at Niagara-on-the-Lake today, you can point at those three bills and say with confidence that they helped to build the town that we know.

But Mike was so much more than just an MPP with an incredible mind for the constituents he served. Speaking to everyone who knew him, the first thing they tell you is, simply, that he was a great community man.

Mr. Speaker, I need to pause here for a second and explain something that’s a little interesting about the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. As many of you know, the town is deeply connected to the history of this province, and to this country. Before the War of 1812, the town—which was called Newark at that time—was actually the first capital of what would become Ontario. It was also the first seat of government for this province. I suppose as a bit of tribute to that incredible heritage, the town remains one of the few jurisdictions that does not call the head of council a mayor. In fact, the actual title is Lord Mayor. Today, the Lord Mayor is Pat Darte, who has continued Mike’s tradition of serving his community.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure you are aware that Mr. Dietsch was not only the Deputy Lord Mayor of the town from 1985 to 1987, but after his time as an MPP he became the Lord Mayor of the town, in 1991. He did such a good job that his neighbours and friends re-elected him in 1994. Rounding out his incredible career, he ran for regional council in 1997, and of course he won.

As you can see, Michael Dietsch held just about every electable position for the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake that he could possibly hold. He was elected so many times because the people of Niagara knew they could depend on him to fight for their interests. I believe his record speaks for itself.

While in office, Mike helped secure—this is very important for Niagara—the second campus at Niagara College, in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and he was there when they broke ground in 1998 with the president of the college, Dan Patterson, a good friend of Mike’s as well. Mike’s wife, Gail, always said that that was his greatest achievement.

Mike also had a big hand in the successful wine industry and the many projects he oversaw as Lord Mayor. The people of Niagara have a lot to say thank you to Mike for.

Mr. Speaker, I’d also like to recognize that beyond his incredible legacy, Mr. Dietsch left behind his wife, Gail, to whom he was married for 52 years, six children and 17 grandchildren. Two of his sons, Matt and Paul, own a very successful restaurant in Niagara-on-the-Lake called Sandtrap and have used it to continue their father’s legacy by giving back to the community.

Mike was a family man, a community man—I’m going to add this: he was an auto worker—and one strong representative. I’m proud to stand here with my colleagues today and honour such a great individual.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute?

Hon. James J. Bradley: The great disadvantage, Mr. Speaker, of being third is that everything has been said that should be said about Mike, and very eloquently by the members representing the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party. I would say ditto to everything that they have had to say. But let me say, first of all, that I knew Mike personally for a long period of time before he was elected to the Legislature, and then he represented part of the city of St. Catharines and the surrounding area, including Niagara-on-the-Lake. His heart was in Niagara-on-the-Lake, quite obviously.

He was, first and foremost, as members have said, a constituency person. He never felt his role was to reflect the views of the Ontario government, of which he was part, to the people of his riding. His role was to reflect the views of the people of his riding to those of us who sat in the Ontario Legislature. He never got Toronto-itis or legislator-itis when he was over here because he recognized how important his own community was, that the people who elected him should come first and foremost in his mind. And so if there was a conflict between what the government policy might be and what Mike Dietsch thought was best for his constituency, you knew where he stood.

His family will tell you, believe it or not, that he could be stubborn from time to time. They'll be shocked to hear that, of course. But he could be, and he was stubborn for a good reason. He was stubborn because he wanted to ensure that his riding was always first and foremost in the eyes of the government and in the eyes of those of us who sit in this assembly.

It is mentioned what his role was municipally. Many people in this House have come from the municipal sector. It's a good grounding for people who sit in the Legislature today. Not essential, but it is a good grounding. As Lord Mayor of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Deputy Lord Mayor, as an alderman, as they were called then, and as a member of regional council, he was always very feisty. I always remember one term he used: "no way, shape or form." He used that very often when he was referring to something that wasn't going to happen or, if it would, it would be over his dead body, politically speaking.

As a member of caucus, Mike was very outspoken. He wasn't afraid, with the Premier sitting there and with others in the cabinet sitting in the caucus, to offend any of them if he felt it was necessary to offend them. And he took up causes. The drought that hit the Niagara Peninsula was one that both members have mentioned, where a bill was brought forward to allow water to be used from drainage ditches. It sounds very basic, but it was very important to the farmers. He understood that because he had a small farm himself, as well as being an autoworker. He maintained both, which allowed Gail to be able to spend a lot of time with the family. He did as well, even when he was here. I am a lacrosse fan, and I used to see him from time to time at lacrosse tournaments where the boys were playing and at other activities with the family, because he was also a very strong family person, and everybody in Niagara-on-the-Lake knew that.

When you think of the grape and wine industry, it was in its fairly fledgling days at the time, a very difficult and challenging time, and he wasn't afraid to assist it. It sounds odd today that you couldn't use a credit card at a winery, and that's why he brought forward that bill. There were also other odd things you couldn't do in a winery. You couldn't go there on a Sunday, and yet many of the people visiting the Niagara region came on a Sunday, so Sunday openings happened to be allowed.

Also near and dear to his heart was Niagara College, as was mentioned, and the campus in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It's a beautiful campus, by the way. I think most members of the Legislature have been there at one time or another.

What a lot of people outside of Niagara-on-the-Lake didn't know was that Mike had a chronic illness. He had cancer for 18 years, but he never wore that on his sleeve. If somebody had asked how he was, his answer would be, "Well, how are you?" He never sought sympathy. He never allowed that to get in the way of doing a job and he carried that extremely well. It was a burden, but nevertheless he carried it extremely well.

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So we will be remembering him for many years to come in this Legislature. I attended the funeral, and I remember there were people from all political stripes, people from all kinds of backgrounds who crowded into the funeral and the reception after to pay tribute to Mike and certainly to Gail, his wife of 52 years; to members of the family, to members of the greater family and to friends. Everybody in Niagara-on-the-Lake at one time or another was a friend of Mike Dietsch.

We're deeply grateful to you for sharing Mike with those of us in the Legislature and with the people of Ontario. He'll be remembered fondly by all of his residents and by those who served with him.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to take this moment to thank all the members for their very heartfelt and kind words that reflect our camaraderie and our friendship. I would also like to tell the family that a copy of Hansard and a DVD or a disk will be provided to the family as a token of our esteem, appreciation and love for Mike Dietsch. I thank you very much for the gift of Mike. Thank you very much, everyone.

Therefore, it is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, five different MPPs asked the Premier if she had confidence in her Minister of Health. They asked whether the Premier would fire him or shuffle him out of the Minister of Health portfolio. Despite all the cuts, the Premier wouldn't answer the question. Five times she avoided answering the question. So it's clear, if this Pre-

mier agrees with the cuts, she will keep him as Minister of Health. If she doesn't agree with the cuts, she will shuffle him out.

Mr. Speaker, here is a crystal-clear question: Will the Minister of Health still have his job as Minister of Health after the next cabinet shuffle, and does the Premier have confidence in him?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm trying to deal with that side. The members will come to order. I'm not going to tolerate that constantly.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have confidence in my Minister of Health. I have confidence in my cabinet. I have confidence in my caucus. I have confidence in this team.

We are in the process of building this province up. We are making investments across the province in hospitals, in schools, in transit, in transportation, in roads and bridges. We are making investments in this province that are going to stand this province in good stead into the future, that are going to make us more prosperous.

Our economy is growing. We're one of the leaders in the country. We are leading this country with our diverse, strong economy. Do I have confidence in my cabinet? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, I do.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you. Start the clock, please.

Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: It will be with extreme disappointment to Ontario nurses, physicians and patients that you stand by this embattled health minister.

I toured the Scarborough Hospital yesterday and again I got to see—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sorry. Stop the clock.

I am now going to move to individuals. I'm going to start with the member from Beaches–East York.

Interjection: Who is not in his seat.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And that's not helpful when I'm trying to get the other side to come to order. That goes for everybody. I'm coming to every individual today.

Please finish.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Touring the Scarborough Hospital, I was able to realize the negative effects of these Liberal cuts. You know who put it best, actually? Former Liberal MPP Bas Balkissoon, who described the situation in Scarborough as not meeting “the needs of modern medicine.”

Yet the Scarborough Hospital wasn't on the government's past capital projects nor in their future plans. All the government does is fund more studies. The hospital staff feel that they're not even on the radar with this government.

Will the Premier put the hacksaw away and finally give the Scarborough Hospital the support it deserves?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to comment on the Scarborough issue.

But I think it is really important to recognize that this is the leader of a party that has consistently—consistently—voted against and opposed the investments that we are making in health care—\$1 billion in our budget. The Leader of the Opposition and their party voted against that and opposed those investments: \$345 million more for hospitals, new funding; \$12 billion to build and renovate hospitals around the province; \$50 million a year to deal with maintenance and deferred maintenance issues.

All of those investments the Leader of the Opposition has opposed, and they have voted against them. It's a bit rich for him to stand up and say that we need to invest more when they vote against every initiative.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: I proudly opposed the budget that cut 1,400 nurses. I proudly opposed the budget that took \$800 million from physicians to take away from patient care.

But let's be very specific about the Scarborough Hospital. The operating rooms are the oldest in the province, created in 1956. The staff of the Scarborough Hospital told me that they're half the size they're supposed to be, to such an extent that they have to put equipment for the operating room in the hallways. It is unacceptable for patient care.

Seven years ago, the province did a study saying that they unequivocally needed new operating rooms. You have sat on the news for seven years that these operating rooms don't meet the standards of modern medicine.

So my question is, will you finally show the respect to the people of Scarborough by giving them the new operating rooms that your own studies show are needed?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please.

Be seated, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: He stood up for Scarborough and now he's gone—a brave man, Balkissoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I am so pleased that the official opposition has finally demonstrated some interest in Scarborough. I don't recall in the last two years a single health care question about Scarborough. I don't know if the timing is coincidental.

But I was recently in Scarborough myself. I stood side by side with every MPP from Scarborough and Durham,

as we announced the result of a one-year focus on health care in Scarborough, where we announced a \$19-million contribution to Scarborough Hospital for diagnostic imaging; we announced a \$5-million planning grant for both Durham and Scarborough regions so we could build new infrastructure; we announced a \$4.5-million increase in operating funds this year for Rouge Valley hospital, \$3 million in new funding for Scarborough Hospital and \$2.6 million more for Lakeridge.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport will come to order.
New question.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. A couple of weeks ago, the Globe and Mail acquired a 57-page climate change action plan. The document was stamped “cabinet confidential.” Now, we all know about “cabinet confidential,” and it’s an important part of our system, an important principle of our parliamentary system. It is a serious breach of trust and ethics to leak cabinet documents. Thanks to the Globe and Mail, we also know the Premier doesn’t trust her own cabinet.

So my question is, does the Premier know which minister walked out of cabinet with this confidential document?

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Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think that the Leader of the Opposition, like his former colleague in the Wildrose in Alberta, really doesn’t want to talk about climate change. He doesn’t want to talk about the realities that we have to take this challenge head-on, that we must make change. We must tackle this because we have a responsibility as a jurisdiction in Canada and as part of the globe. The changes that we’re making—the cap-and-trade, the Climate Change Action Plan that we’re putting in place—are going to drive innovation in this province, are going to drive down greenhouse gas emissions, and are going to help Canada to meet its commitment in the global fight.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: My question was actually about the cabinet leak, but I’ll ask another question.

According to the Globe and Mail, the Premier believes some ministers are not pulling their weight. To be honest, I happen to agree with the Premier. But who exactly isn’t pulling their weight? Is it the Minister of Children and Youth Services, who took away IBI therapy from five-year-old children with autism? Is it the Minister of Health, who recklessly fired 1,400 nurses? Is it the Minister of Community and Social Services, who has thrown away \$292 million on computer systems that don’t work?

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us exactly which minister she thinks isn’t pulling their weight and which one of them leaked the cabinet document?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Mr. Mike Colle: Do you believe in climate change? Ask him.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence, come to order.

Mr. Mike Colle: Do you believe in it? Stand up and say it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence, second time.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Once again, I would say to the Leader of the Opposition, I actually do understand why he would want to lower himself to make personal, divisive attacks, because he cannot take on the challenge of talking about climate—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have been crystal clear, Mr. Speaker, that we on this side of the House see it as our responsibility to tackle this threat that is probably the greatest threat that humanity has ever faced. The fact that we have taken the largest initiative in North America by shutting down the coal-fired plants doesn’t mean we can rest on our laurels. It means that we have to move ahead and we have to take initiatives that lead the country and lead the globe in terms of developing innovation and technology to tackle the greenhouse gas emissions on this planet.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: The personal and divisive comments that I was attributing are sourced to you, the Premier of Ontario, in the Globe and Mail.

Let me add one other reference to the Premier’s opinions. Liberal sources went on to tell the Globe that the Premier believes “longer-serving members of cabinet are not particularly effective communicators.” Again, I happen to agree with the Premier. Just look at the Minister of Education and how she blew millions of dollars on pizza parties and hotel rooms. Or look at the Minister of Energy, who told us that the gas plant scandal was going to cost a cup of coffee. Let’s not forget the Minister of the Environment, who told us they were going to ban both nuclear and natural gas.

Someone in this cabinet leaked this ridiculous plan to ban natural gas. So instead of throwing one of these ministers under the bus, is the Premier going to take responsibility for this cabinet leak and the ridiculous plan to ban natural gas?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, second time.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the comments attributed to me about my team are false. I made it clear when I was in Alberta that we have no intention of banning natural gas.

Here's what we're going to do with the bus: We're going to make sure the bus is clean, we're going to make sure that it's emissions-free and we're going to make sure that we have a province that is a leader in fighting climate change—something that that party has opposed at every turn.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Premier did not run on a platform to sell Hydro One. In fact, she stood in this House and said straight from her own lips that it was not for sale, and she promised, at the same time, that she was going to be open and transparent. Eighty per cent of the people of Ontario want to keep Hydro One public, and over 200 municipalities say the same thing. Not a single Ontarian voted for the sell-off of Hydro One, but today, for the very first time in the history of our province, private shareholder meetings are happening across the street because this Premier broke her promise.

Will the Premier do the right thing and stop selling off any further shares of Hydro One?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the leader of the third party knows that I ran on a platform that was designed to invest in infrastructure across this province. What that means is to build transit, to build roads and bridges, and we talked about assets—

Mr. Paul Miller: You never mentioned Hydro.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We talked about a review of assets that was going to generate revenue to allow us to make those investments.

The leader of the third party was clear about that because she started opposing it right from the get-go. She opposed those investments in transit, she opposed those investments in expanding the northern highways and she opposed those investments in hospitals and schools around the province because she fundamentally opposed the investments in infrastructure that are so desperately needed for this economy.

That's what we ran on, and that's exactly what we're doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what I fundamentally oppose is a Premier who is not telling the truth to the people of this province around this—

Interjections.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I withdraw. Speaker, I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw because you can't say indirectly what you can't say directly.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I did actually withdraw, Speaker, and I do withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What I actually fundamentally oppose is a government that doesn't tell the people of the province their intention to sell off a revenue-generating asset that belongs to the people of this province.

What I also fundamentally oppose is a Premier who is not paying attention to what the Financial Accountability Officer of this province says, which is that, in fact, the worst way to try to fund infrastructure is to sell off a revenue-generating asset in the province of Ontario. That's what I fundamentally oppose.

My question is, why is this Premier not standing up for what is best for the people of this province?

Premier Wynne: Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we've been clear all along that we want to maximize the value of assets owned by the people of Ontario to better produce value to reinvest in new assets to have even greater returns. That's exactly what's happening. In fact, we now have a corporation that is more improved and more customer-focused. It has greater investments and has increased value for the shareholders, who are the people of Ontario right now. It has unlocked billions of dollars needed—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, second time.

Minister?

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Hon. Charles Sousa: It's unlocked billions of dollars of needed capital to invest in infrastructure, which the member opposite has opposed. More importantly, the foregone revenue the member talks about is in fact being made up by greater returns that are being had as a result of the investments that we make.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Selling off Hydro One will shoot the rates through the roof. It happens every time there is a privatization of hydro, regardless of where in the world it has happened. It started with Mike Harris right here in the province of Ontario, and this Premier is finishing his job.

It is bad for families. It is bad for businesses. It is bad for Ontario's bottom line, says the Financial Accountability Officer. The independent Financial Accountability Officer says it will actually cost us money. It means a bigger deficit and less money for transit and infrastructure.

The evidence is clear. The Liberal claims simply are not based in reality. They are nothing but Liberal Party

spin. Will this Premier stop the sell-off before it is too late?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.
Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Talking about spin, the member opposite knows all too well the Ontario Energy Board actually sets the rates. It won't be Hydro One. She also knows that we're doing this in tranches to minimize the risk, unlike what happened with the sale of the 407.

We still retain the largest ownership of Hydro One, a much more improved company, and the markets have indicated that the reaction to the Hydro One process is making it more valuable, is providing even greater dividends to the province. No one can have more than 10% ownership of Hydro One, which minimizes the very risks the member is talking about.

The majority of the province, the majority of the company is still owned by retail investors that are Ontarians, as well as the province of Ontario. It's better for the province. It's more money for infrastructure. It's better for our economy.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Back to the Premier—but I have to say our priority is people, not the markets. It's people, Speaker. That's what should be important.

Ontarians want to know that when their loved—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Please carry on.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontarians want to know that when their loved ones need care, their hospital is safe and it's been properly repaired.

Records show—the ones that New Democrats got—just how much repair work is needed at each hospital in Ontario. Collectively, it's over \$3.2 billion of repair backlogs, but the government has censored which hospitals actually need the work.

Will this Premier actually be open and transparent, show Ontarians the respect they deserve and release the complete list?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, I know what the leader of the third party is suggesting. She wants to reveal, in advance of any bidding process, to potential contractors, to bidders—she wants to reveal what the hospital, the Ministry of Health and the government think is the cost of renovating or improving or maintaining a facility—to give that unfair advantage in a bidding process, which would enable those potential bidders to actually reflect what they believe they can get rather than the best price, which is what government should be looking for.

But it's important to note as well that when we look at the issue of deferred maintenance, it doesn't simply represent a total of all the necessary repairs required to

enable a hospital to deliver quality services. It represents the dollars that would be required to upgrade all hospitals in Ontario to “brand new hospital” status.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This has nothing to do with contractors; it has to do with the rights of people to know what's happening in their local hospitals.

Yesterday, the Minister of Health told reporters that hospitals with the greatest repair needs include entirely new builds. He apparently clarified this a little while later to say that some of this might be in places where hospitals may actually be replaced. But of course, the government isn't releasing the names of those hospitals, so the Liberals are asking Ontarians to just take their word for it. We don't know if a hospital that needs \$200 million in maintenance is slated to be replaced in a year, in 20 years or at all.

Until the government releases the facts, they're expecting Ontarians to just trust them. Will this Premier show Ontarians the respect they deserve and release the complete list?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I know that the leader of the third party wants to completely disrupt, if not destroy, the competitive bidding process. It would be completely inappropriate, for example, for a new build as well, to actually provide a dollar-value estimate from the government in terms of what we think is required to build that new hospital or to renovate it. It's just ludicrous, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker.

I'm proud of this government's record of past investment. We have 35 new or highly renovated hospital projects under way in the province right now as we speak, Mr. Speaker. We're investing \$12 billion in new capital spends over the next 10 years—\$100 million each and every year just specifically for maintenance.

As I mentioned, for deferred maintenance, it would be the example of your house, of what it would cost to rebuild your house so it is in brand new status. That's a very different thing than what's required to provide quality health care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, more than \$3.2 billion is needed to fix our hospitals just to keep them safe and prevent imminent breakdowns. That was what was reported in the FOI that we received from this minister's staff and his ministry. He had better read the FOI that we received.

According to the auditor, Ontario is falling behind each and every year when it comes to making those investments. In fact, the auditor said, “In the last five years, hospitals spent on average \$45 million a year of operating funds”—that should be going to patient care—“on capital and other funding needs.” This is happening at the same time that the Liberals froze hospital operating budgets, Speaker, for four straight years.

When will this Premier and this minister cut the spin and admit that the Liberals are failing to properly fund hospital repairs?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, it's precisely in response to our agreement with the Auditor General's report that we put substantial new funds into the budget that was recently approved. So I'm not sure what the leader of the third party is referring to and why they chose not to support a budget that agreed with the Auditor General, that invested more money, \$12 billion in capital, doubling the deferred maintenance from \$50 million a year to \$100 million a year. We're making those investments, notwithstanding them voting against the budget. We responded to the Auditor General's report. We've responded to the needs that have been identified for us and on our behalf by the hospitals across the province.

It's important to recognize what deferred maintenance is. It's an estimation, on a go-forward basis, for a whole slew of activities that may need to be replaced in the coming years. We've got a plan to do that in an orderly, responsible fashion that maintains the quality of care.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier.

This morning, the Financial Accountability Officer confirmed what we here already know: This government is neither open nor transparent. He said it is "highly disappointing" that instead of looking to maximize information disclosure, this government restricts disclosure. This impedes "the ability of MPPs to perform their ... duties of holding the government to account."

They have repeatedly missed reporting requirements under the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act since 2012. They cancelled the gas plant scandal hearings, removed Legislature officer oversight on Hydro One, and regularly stonewalled the FAO and Auditor General from receiving necessary information.

I ask the Premier: Are cabinet leaks and criminal investigations the only way we can ever get the real facts here?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me talk about the Financial Accountability Officer. We have a real respect for this office. The member opposite knows that we worked—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Ministries work closely with the FAO. The member opposite knows that we worked with the opposition parties. We recognize, during a minority Parliament, that we worked together to establish the office of the FAO. Both the legislation and the office of the Financial Accountability Officer were modelled after the parliamentary budget officer.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Leeds–Grenville.

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Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That was the agreement and the discussion that we talked about with the oppos-

ition. It is the office, and the parameters of his job and of that office are modelled after the parliamentary budget officer. That is the work that we did together.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Leeds–Grenville, second time.

Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: The FAO told us that there is "a broader pattern" of refusals for access to information. He also said the government's stonewalling has made it "difficult ... to assess the plausibility of the government's financial projections and to evaluate risks that ... those projections would not be met." He doesn't trust their numbers.

The FAO said the government is withholding documents and shocked us, Speaker, by saying he believes this is "political direction."

This is unbelievable. From backroom deals to stonewalling officers of the Legislature, this government only does what's best for the Liberal Party.

Speaker, will the Premier end this pattern of obstruction and give the FAO the necessary documents to do his job?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I want to reiterate that we work very closely with the Financial Accountability Officer—the first of its kind in Canada for a province to undertake.

Additionally—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we respect the work that the Financial Accountability Officer does for our province. That's why we put in place the opportunities to have more forward thinking and review of the actions that we take.

Additionally, we will be sending a government-wide directive to all offices to ensure that offices are responding to the FAO in a consistent and timely manner. To be clear: Requests for information from the FAO are responded to by non-partisan officials, not by the political staff.

During the minority government, all parties worked together to establish the FAO and the legislation that governs the office. We are working within those parameters. We'll continue to work collaboratively with the FAO on an ongoing basis and we will provide the information that we're allowed.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, the NDP fought hard to ensure that this Legislature and MPPs have a Financial Accountability Officer here. New Democrats believe in independent oversight. When the legislation was written, no one expected the Premier and the Liberal government to deny the Financial Accountability Officer the information he needs to do his job.

This morning, the FAO called a news conference and he said, "It is highly disappointing that instead of looking to maximize the information that the government can provide to MPPs and through them all Ontarians, the government is focusing on how it can restrict disclosure of information."

Why is this Premier trying to undermine yet another independent watchdog?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We value the work that the Financial Accountability Officer does. We are working collaboratively with them. We recognize the necessity for a timely manner in which information is received. We also recognize the duty that we have in regard to confidentiality requirements in the work that we do. I know the members opposite respect that, and if they don't they should. We will continue to work with the Financial Accountability Officer to provide the information necessary—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You've got two.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to work with the FAO, as we always have.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: The Liberals have tried to undermine the Auditor General of this province. They have fought with the Ombudsman's office. Now they're refusing to give the Financial Accountability Officer the information that he needs to assess the financial impact of this government's decisions.

Mr. Speaker, there is a pattern here. This government seems to have a problem with transparency and accountability and openness. As the FAO has said this morning: "They are saying that they're an 'open government,' and I'm saying, 'Well, let's see the data to show that you're open.'"

The Premier talks a lot—a lot—about openness and transparency. Will she be open with Ontario's independent, non-partisan Financial Accountability Officer, or will she continue to stonewall?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We will continue to work with the FAO. I talk with him on an ongoing basis. Even yesterday, my officials met with the FAO, because we recognize how important the work he does is and that he must have information on a timely basis within the confines—in fact, the FAO recently said, "I respect the concept of cabinet confidentiality," that yes, they do need to have cabinet confidentiality. We do require some degree of confidentiality when we're putting forward some of the issues.

We recognize as well that the FAO, as well as the Auditor General, requires information when it's available. At this point in time, we will make everything available. A directive is being sent across the ministries to ensure that the officials, which are the non-partisan officials of this government, which does have an ongoing relationship with the FAO—to provide the information that is required within the act that that member approved and supported, Mr. Speaker.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Yesterday, I was so proud to be in this room to hear the Premier apologize to survivors of residential schools for this dark chapter in our history and the lasting impacts it still has for indigenous peoples. The Premier announced, as part of her apology, a new strategy to bring meaningful change to the lives of indigenous people and the communities in the spirit of reconciliation called The Journey Together, Ontario's action plan for reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

Can the minister please tell us more about this action plan and tell us why it is so important for our relationship with indigenous peoples in Ontario?

Hon. David Zimmer: I thank the member for that very important question. Since the release of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission last December, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs has been working across ministries to prepare Ontario's response to this document. It is a whole-of-government response. We are taking action on the recommendations. It is a priority for this government.

I am very pleased to reiterate that commitment with yesterday's announcement of the document The Journey Together. This is another step on the path to reconciliation, but it is not the end of the journey. There is much, much work to do, together with our indigenous partners and all Ontarians, to make meaningful change and genuine reconciliation a reality.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It is wonderful to hear that the government is honouring the commitments it has made to address the legacy of residential schools and work with indigenous partners to develop a new path forward towards reconciliation.

I know that taking action on the recommendations contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report is a priority for the Ontario government and that we are committed towards achieving true reconciliation. I understand that the action plan builds on positive first steps already taken by our government to strengthen the partnerships based on mutual respect and shared benefits.

Could the minister please tell us more about the steps our government will take to bring real change to the lives of indigenous peoples and communities?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. David Zimmer: The Journey Together, Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, is aimed at improving social, economic and health outcomes through five broad themes. The themes are: (1) understanding the legacy of residential schools; (2) closing the gaps and removing the barriers; (3) creating a culturally relevant and responsive justice system; (4) supporting indigenous culture; and (5) reconciling relations with indigenous peoples.

Ontario plans to invest \$253 million over the next three years on programs and actions guided by these five themes, which are in turn a response to the 94 recommendations of the TRC report. Shaped by the document The Journey Together, Ontario, along with indigenous partners and the federal government, will work to achieve measurable change for indigenous communities. It's long required.

1140

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Ontario is a vibrant province with a rich and diverse culture. Our pluralism makes us stronger. Freedom of religion is fundamental to the freedom we love and enjoy in Canada. In Sikhism, the wearing of the turban is an essential symbol of identity of the members of the Sikh faith. And now it's time for a motorcycle helmet exemption for Sikh riders, like the ones that exist in British Columbia, Manitoba and the United Kingdom.

Will the Premier commit to amending the Highway Traffic Act to accommodate the rights of Sikhs to display their faith?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I agree with the member opposite, and our government recognizes the importance of preserving the fundamental right of religious expression. We have to strike the right balance between public safety and religious accommodation. It is absolutely critical. We're very proud of our record of road safety in Ontario. We consistently rank among the safest roads in North America. In Ontario crash data, we know that riders without helmets involved in a collision had a 17% greater risk of being killed or seriously injured—17%.

Mr. Todd Smith: Why did you promise it, then?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I will say to the heckler opposite that I have never said this is something that we would do. There are people in this room who know and my caucus knows that I said we would look at it. We would look for the evidence, and the evidence points to safety, requiring a helmet on motorcycles.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: Standing up for freedom of religion shouldn't be something you only do at the Khalsa Day Parade or before an election. It is something that you should do each and every day.

Members of the community, some who are present here today, feel betrayed by the Premier. They feel that

she went back on her promise, and it's not just the Premier going back on her promise; it's every member of your caucus in Peel.

I will try again: Will you honour your promise? Will you honour the promise that the members of your government made? Will you do the right thing and support the member from Prince Edward-Hastings and his bill to amend the Highway Traffic Act to accommodate members of the Sikh faith?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have struggled with this issue. I struggled with this issue when I was the Minister of Transportation and I have struggled with this issue as Premier.

I understand the politics that the Leader of the Opposition is playing, Mr. Speaker, but he is perpetrating a falsehood. I never, ever—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, I ask.

Withdraw.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have never said that we would take this move.

When we know that wearing helmets means that injury rates go down 75%, I will not be the Premier who stands in front of a mother whose son has been killed because he was not wearing a helmet. I will not be that Premier, Mr. Speaker. I am going to make sure that we do everything we can to keep the roads in Ontario safe.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

New question.

ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Ms. Sarah Campbell: To the Premier: In April, Azraya Kokopenace, a 14-year-old girl and member of the Grassy Narrows First Nation, walked away from the Lake of the Woods hospital in Kenora and she was found dead two days later. There's a lot we don't know about what happened to Azraya. Why did the police drop her off at the hospital? Why did she walk away? But what we do know from her father is that Azraya needed help. Azraya was involved in the child welfare system and under the care of the hospital when she went missing.

Will the Premier commit to bringing the Kokopenace family and her community of Grassy Narrows some peace and back their call for a coroner's inquest?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the member for this important question. Whenever a child in the welfare system or outside of it is devastatingly impacted, as described here, we are all deeply concerned. We know

there's more work to do in the child welfare system. We're working very hard with our indigenous partners in reforming that system and supporting culturally appropriate services and programs to those communities and, quite frankly, looking at the broader system as well to make sure that children in care are front and centre and that those children's best interests are always put first and foremost.

We work very closely with our indigenous partners on child welfare reform when it comes to those communities, and we'll continue that work with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: To be clear, these services don't exist. They don't even exist in Kenora, where families are told that they have to travel 500 kilometres to Thunder Bay to access some of these very basic mental health services for youth.

Yesterday's announcement at the truth and reconciliation process was a moment when government recognized the need to listen, to be humble, to acknowledge the powerful legacy of our relationships with First Nations. But we need to do more than just acknowledge; we need action on this mental health crisis resulting from this legacy for First Nations, especially for young people.

A coroner's inquest is required here. What response does the Premier have to Azraya's family and to the community of Grassy Narrows, which is already reeling from environmental devastation? What action is the Premier prepared to take?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Yesterday was indeed a very important day. In fact, I held a third round table with our Métis, ONWA and family friendship centres to develop the work further on our soon-to-be renamed indigenous child and youth strategy. A big part of that is making sure we have the right mental health supports for indigenous children, both from a prevention point of view as well as when children in those communities enter care.

The Minister of Health has announced additional funding to support the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, and we recognize that additional supports are always required. We've supported training for aboriginal mental health addiction workers with annual funding of \$3 million.

Is there more to do? Yes. I'm happy to talk one-on-one with this member about this particular—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

YOUTH SERVICES

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Attorney General. Our government is committed to ending chronic homelessness in 10 years. We're also delivering on our priority of targeting youth homelessness. We know that LGBTQ and two-spirited youth experience far higher rates of homelessness than other young people. These grim statistics reflect the toll that homophobia and transphobia take on our youth. They face violence and harass-

ment in our schools, within families and other communities. They have rejection of their sexual identity, which is integral to who they are.

Could the minister please tell us what this government is doing to help support LGBTQ and two-spirited youth in Ontario?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I want to thank the member from Kitchener Centre for her important question. Every young person, as they grow and develop, needs a supportive home and a caring adult to help them reach their full potential.

Just this morning, the Premier announced that our government is supporting the OUTreach program, a mental health support crisis centre for LGBTQ youth run by Egale Canada Human Rights Trust. We are providing up to \$1.5 million in funding for this drop-in crisis centre over three years. It gives young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless an array of crucial services.

Too often, our community's youth avoid seeking help because of encounters with homophobia and transphobia at other institutions. Egale offers them an accepting and welcoming place to get the kind of help that can make a profound difference in their life.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'd like to thank the minister for her answer and for her attention and her commitment to this very important issue. We know that this mental health support crisis centre offers an accepting and welcoming place to get the kind of help that makes a profound difference in a young person's life.

On Wednesday, the Premier is going to be attending the pride flag-raising at Queen's Park. This is a very important symbol of Ontario's commitment to equality.

1150

Minister, despite how far we have come over the past few decades, we still have a very long way to go. For example, Ontario's current law on who can form a family is outdated, as it does not reflect present realities. Minister, can you please tell this House what you are doing to ensure that Ontario's laws do reflect acceptance for all families?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First, let me thank the member from Parkdale-High Park for bringing forward her private member's bill that would modernize our legislation. We are committed, as I said last week, to fixing this.

As the Premier said this morning, she asked me to bring forward legislation in September that would, if passed, ensure that all parents are clearly recognized in Ontario, whether they be gay or straight and whether their children are conceived with or without assistance.

For this legislation, the Premier asked me to work with the member from Parkdale-High Park and stakeholders to craft a bill based on the work that has already been done by the Uniform Law Conference of Canada. The conference consulted with provinces, stakeholders and legal experts in preparing its guidance. It provides a solid starting point for an Ontario bill—British Columbia and

Alberta already have this bill in place—because we would like to see the definition changed in Ontario by the end of this year—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
New question.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Minister, let me share the story of Chelsea and her son, Charlie. On May 4, Charlie was told he was being terminated from IBI therapy as of September, just in time for Charlie to go to school. The problem is, Minister, that Charlie isn't ready for school. He hasn't achieved half of his developmental goals. So Charlie is expected to go to school in September without the tools that he needs to succeed. Charlie is being set up to fail. It's not right and it's not fair.

I will ask the minister again: Will she reverse her decision and allow children like Charlie to continue receiving IBI therapy until they have met their developmental goals?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank my critic for the question as well. It's important to remember, for children who are in IBI therapy currently, that they will continue in IBI therapy until their next assessment.

I think that there's a myth out there, a myth that needs to be clarified: These children, after a clinical assessment, are not automatically dropped. They will be assessed and their future treatment will be recommended by a clinician, and a transition plan will be established.

It's important to remember, too, that IBI and ABA are essentially the same thing. The difference is the intensity of the service. What we're moving to is a system that moves away from extreme choices, and we are building a model—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin–Caledon, come to order.
Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It is very frustrating, Speaker. The message is not getting through. This is not a myth. From Chelsea's e-mail: "My son, Charlie, was terminated from IBI at his six-month progress service. He is not ready for school."

Charlie has waited two years to start IBI therapy, only to be told that he's out in September—no appeal, no transition, no direct funding option.

I will ask again, on behalf of the children like Charlie and the thousands of kids in Ontario with ASD: Will the minister reverse her decision to remove IBI therapy for kids over five until she has a coordinated provincial autism strategy in place?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.
Minister?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: My commitment to families and these children is that they will have a personalized plan of care that is responsive to their needs and to their changing circumstances. Families have asked us for this, and providers have been asking for this. Experts have said this. That's exactly why we're doing this.

I'm very pleased to say, Speaker, that we're working very closely with the Ministry of Education when it comes to the Connections program, to ensure smooth transitions well before a child goes into the school system and while they start in a school system.

I'm also very pleased to report that, as of this point, over 434 families have met with their service provider. That has just happened in a week. Over half of the involved families have had their first meeting. Some are taking second meetings.

We're monitoring these situations on a case-by-case basis with the families. We're listening to what the families are saying and we're—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin–Caledon, second time.

The member from Hamilton Mountain, second time.

The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned.

New question.

MERCURY POISONING

M^{me} France G  linas: Ma question est pour la premi  re ministre.

Yesterday, the day we apologized to our First Nations people, the Premier said that she did not know the source and had not read the report into the cleanup options for the mercury poisoning the First Nations people of Grassy Narrows. Well, maybe I can help, Speaker. It is the government-appointed working group, and I don't know why no one in the government has read it, because they got the report back in April.

It is disappointing to hear in response to the report that, yesterday, the Ministry of the Environment said, "Currently there is no evidence to suggest that mercury levels in the river system are such that any remediation, beyond continuing natural sedimentation remediation, would be warranted."

Does the Premier think that this is an acceptable response to the First Nations people of Grassy Narrows?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I actually have now read the recommendations of the report. From those recommendations, it's not very clear exactly what the solution is. If the member opposite looks through the recommendations, she will see that the first recommendation starts with putting in place some field studies to determine whether there is mercury still leaking and to determine whether capping or dredging or some other solution would be the answer.

I said yesterday that I had not read the report; the report has been read in government. I have now looked at the recommendations, and I certainly will be talking with

the Minister of the Environment to see if that recommendation around field studies is something that we can do.

Rest assured, Mr. Speaker, there is no clear direction in that report that points to a simple solution. It is a complex issue. There may be some solutions that have arisen in the last few years, but there is no one solution that's going to solve the mercury problem at Grassy Narrows.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The report says that remediation can be enhanced by applying a layer of clay to the source of the sediments, very much like we have done in my riding with similar problems. It is safe, it is cheap, and it is an effective method.

Leaders at Grassy Narrows First Nation travelled, again, the 1,700 kilometres to come to Queen's Park to plead with this government to act, to clean up the river that is poisoning them. Two years ago, Chief Steve Fobister had to starve himself on the lawn at Queen's Park to get a meeting with this government. It took a Japanese research team to fly around the world to get that research restarted.

Speaker, my question on behalf of the good people of Grassy Narrows is simple: When will the Premier clean up the mercury contamination in Wabigoon River and Clay Lake?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I have sat in the community hall at Grassy Narrows. I have heard from residents who have been affected, some of whom have gotten compensation; others from surrounding communities have not. The discussion that was referenced, in terms of the Japanese expert and the issues around Minamata disease—I have heard those concerns. I have also heard from scientists who have differing views about how that water can be cleaned up and how the mercury can be dealt with.

As I said, the report that I have now seen, that I have looked at, suggests that there is a need for some field studies to look at what the possibilities might be.

The member opposite can pick one solution. There are partial solutions. The report says that there are certain sections of the river starting downstream that might be dealt with. We're going to look at that report and make a decision.

1200

BEEF PRODUCERS

Mr. Grant Crack: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and this question is in good taste. Summer weather has arrived and barbecue season has arrived. My mouth waters when I speak of all the folks across the province that will be grilling seasoned steaks, barbecuing steaks and beef hamburgers. They're going to be topped off with Ontario tomatoes, lettuce and French's ketchup.

I was excited to hear how important beef farming is in Ontario. Cattle farming in our great province generates almost \$9 billion in retail sales every year. But with beef from other provinces and countries sold in our grocery stores, can the minister explain how the government is supporting Ontario's beef farmers to help ensure that they remain competitive?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to really thank the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for that very meaty question this morning. Remember the famous Wendy's commercial, when Dave Thomas was there and that little old lady came up and said, "Where's the beef?" The beef will be out front of Queen's Park, corn-fed beef. I recommend that everybody get out there and sample the very best beef that Ontario has to offer.

As the member has indicated, beef is a very important part of Ontario's agri-food sector, responsible for 9,500 jobs in primary production and another 9,000 jobs in processing. Last year, seven days a week, Ontario exported 58 million kilograms of chilled and frozen beef worth \$355 million. This government, from the made-in-Ontario Risk Management Program to cost-shared funding under Growing Forward 2—farmers can access a range of programs to support sustainable growth.

Today, I want to focus on a program unique to beef farming in Ontario: the feeder cattle loan program. I'll talk about it in the supplementary—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, you will.

Supplementary?

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you to the hard-working and articulate Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for that response. It's good to know that our government is ensuring that beef farmers have access to a wide range of programs that will support growth and help new farmers get started. By working together, Ontario can support a thriving cattle industry across the province.

Since being established, the Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program has supported nearly \$1.53 billion in direct economic activity. There has also never been a claim against the government's guarantee in the history of the program. In order to improve the program, the Beef Farmers of Ontario have been asking the government to increase the maximum individual loan limits under the Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program and increase the loan guarantee.

Can the hard-working minister elaborate on the improvements that the government is making to the feeder cattle loan program?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to say that the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell's supplementary—that was a sizzling, sizzling supplementary.

This morning, I had the great honour of working with our industry. At 7 a.m., we made the announcement that, effective immediately, we are doubling the cap on the Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program in the province of Ontario. That is, the program is going from \$130 million to \$260 million per year. This, along with changes that we made last year to double the individual lending limits, will allow more farmers access to competitive interest rates and new farmers to get into this exciting industry.

We're also looking at making changes to make it easier to access the loan program. This government stands with the farmers of the province of Ontario.

MILTON COURTHOUSE

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Attorney General. As the Attorney General knows, we've been working with local municipal officials, including regional chair Gary Carr, lawyers and Halton area MPPs, to push for a new Halton courthouse. A new courthouse in Halton is urgently needed. The existing facility in Milton is aging, overcrowded and completely inadequate in terms of security and privacy. Questions have even been raised about access to justice.

When I raised this issue in question period in March 2015, the Attorney General assured us that a new Halton courthouse was a priority. That was 14 months ago. Can the Attorney General update the House on the status of the planning process, which surely should be under way, for a new Halton courthouse, and what specific steps she has taken to move this project forward?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I want to thank the member for his question. Yes, the Milton courthouse is still our number one priority in our ministry, and we recognize that the Milton courthouse has many deficits. I hear it from my side, from the MPPs from Burlington, Halton, Mississauga–Streetsville, and the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Labour. They're all—I think I will need security pretty soon, because I hear it. It's a priority. We're working on it. My ministry is already on the Milton courthouse. I visited the Milton courthouse. I know the situation, and we will keep you posted on the progress of this file.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I would be remiss not to recognize three very important guests who were in the assembly with us. I want to recognize Joyce Crago, who is the artist behind the exhibit "Because It's 2016" and lives in my community of Ottawa Centre. With her was councillor Catherine McKenney, who represents the Somerset ward in the community of Ottawa Centre, along with her daughter Kenney. I welcome them to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I am going to say that that's not a point of order, and as a result of yesterday and some reflection of mine—we have set aside time to introduce people. If they're not in the House at that time, I would ask you to introduce them anyway. This is going to become a problem for us, that we keep expanding the times in which we use—right now, we're in between a vote. So I'm going to ask all members to be sensitive to the fact that these after-the-fact things are happening and we should improve it.

The member from Prince Edward–Hastings on a point of order.

Mr. Todd Smith: Two guests that I was remiss—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not a point of order. And I'm going to be insistent on that, people.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 74, as amended, related to arranging proceedings of Bill 201, An Act to amend the Election Finances Act and the Taxation Act, 2007.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1207 to 1212.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On May 30, Mr. Naqvi moved government notice of motion number 74, which was amended to read as follows:

"That, notwithstanding any standing order"—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispensed.

All those in favour of the motion, as amended, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia
Anderson, Granville	Hoggarth, Ann	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Arnott, Ted	Hoskins, Eric	Naqvi, Yasir
Bailey, Robert	Hudak, Tim	Nicholls, Rick
Baker, Yvan	Hunter, Mitzie	Oraziotti, David
Ballard, Chris	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Kiwala, Sophie	Rinaldi, Lou
Chan, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sandals, Liz
Clark, Steve	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Coe, Lorne	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Coteau, Michael	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Damerla, Dipika	Martins, Cristina	Thibeault, Glenn
Del Duca, Steven	Martow, Gila	Vernile, Daiene
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Walker, Bill
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Dickson, Joe	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Dong, Han	McMahon, Eleanor	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	McMeekin, Ted	Yakabuski, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Meilleur, Madeleine	Yurek, Jeff
Fraser, John	Miller, Norm	Zimmer, David
Hardeman, Ernie	Moridi, Reza	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras
Bisson, Gilles	Gretzky, Lisa	Sattler, Peggy
Campbell, Sarah	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Jagmeet
Fife, Catherine	Horwath, Andrea	Tabuns, Peter
French, Jennifer K.	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul	Vanthof, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 71; the nays are 18.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion, as amended, carried.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1216 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Introduction of guests. The member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Speaker, I will respect your ruling from this morning. Even though they're not here in the Legislature at the present time, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly, constituents from my riding of Leeds–Grenville. I'd like to introduce Gareth Jones and Chrisy Tremblay. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you for acknowledging our introduction process.

The member from Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, I'm in the same situation. I have two guests who I assume will be here very shortly: Vince and Espy Leitaio.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions?

Mr. Bill Walker: My cousin Jim Cole was here earlier, out on the grounds, from the Beef Ontario group. He's a director and very involved with the co-operatives up in our neck of the woods. I didn't know he was here today on behalf of Beef Ontario until I was out having lunch.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

Mr. Bill Walker: Today is the World Health Organization's World No Tobacco Day, an event that is particularly relevant for our province, given Ontario's serious illegal cigarette problem.

Contraband tobacco is extremely cheap. A baggie of 200 cigarettes often costs less than a movie ticket or one tenth the price of legal product. It is sold through a criminal distribution network that connects cigarettes to kids without the hassles of checking for ID. I've heard it from people right in my own riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound: The youth today are smoking contraband because they are very inexpensive and easily accessible. As such, illegal cigarettes are a prime source for youth smoking. In fact, a study by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health flagged the easy accessibility to contraband tobacco and its low price as prime reasons for our stubbornly high youth smoking rate.

Ontario has the worst contraband tobacco problem in Canada. An average one in three cigarettes purchased in

2015 were illegal, and so far these disturbing statistics have held true for the first part of 2016.

Illegal cigarettes also fund some of Canada's least desirable elements. The RCMP estimates that contraband tobacco is the cash cow of more than 175 criminal gangs, who use the proceeds to finance other activities including guns, drugs and human smuggling.

World No Tobacco Day offers an important opportunity to discuss the fact that illegal cigarettes continue to be a scourge on Ontario's communities. They fund organized crime, they facilitate youth smoking and they short-change taxpayers a phenomenal amount of money.

In Quebec, tough anti-contraband measures introduced in 2009 have led to a 50% decrease in contraband. As such, I remind the Ontario government that it too needs to fully enforce its Smoke-Free Ontario Act and take action today to crack down on the sale of contraband tobacco in our communities.

POVERTY

Mr. Paul Miller: Appalling levels of poverty persist in this province, most especially and shamefully in many of our First Nations communities, but also in my own riding of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Ontario's desperately low social assistance rates leave families hungry, under-housed and sick; and 30,000 people in Hamilton work every day but do not earn enough to pull themselves out of poverty because they do not earn a living wage. As a result, more than one in five children in Hamilton live in poverty.

But today I'm bringing good news, Speaker. The city of Hamilton this month announced a 10-year poverty reduction strategy which I hope the government will follow. Funded with \$50 million of the city's own resources—even though the city is suffering from infrastructure problems—the city is investing \$20 million in affordable housing and \$30 million in other anti-poverty work. The city's investment plan will be guided by the priorities articulated by local residents and community groups, instead of following the all-too-familiar top-down approach.

Some may say that tackling poverty is part of the province's job description, and indeed it is. We here have a moral imperative to reduce poverty, but instead of passing the buck and waiting for adequate provincial help, Hamilton leaders are taking responsibility for their people.

I want to commend Hamilton city council and the mayor of Hamilton in particular for their leadership and initiative in fighting against poverty. I ask the provincial government to work with the city of Hamilton and to offer real financial support to build on this rare municipal investment.

LALI VIJ

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I am honoured to speak today on a sombre anniversary for so many Ontario residents. This past Saturday marked 25 years since the

tragic death of prominent South Asian radio and television broadcaster Lali Vij. On May 28, 1991, this respected Toronto journalist was gunned down in an act of senseless violence in the parking lot of his downtown studio. While this is a sad anniversary, we will always remember Lali Vij for his wonderful personality and numerous contributions.

He was the popular host and producer of the Sounds of Asia television show, which ran for many years on both Global Television and Citytv. It featured many talented people from South Asia and gained international recognition. Prior to that, he hosted a radio program called Voice of India, broadcasting in Hindi. Lali Vij was a respected and admired member of the South Asian community and was instrumental in shaping multicultural media and entertainment right here in Ontario.

I hope that all members of the House will join me in extending our sympathies to his wife, Sameer, and their two sons. The impact Lali Vij made on the South Asian ethnocultural communities will be long-lasting. Twenty-five years after his passing, the legacy of Lali Vij remains strong.

LANGUAGE TRAINING

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Buon giorno a tutti. I rise today to speak on the importance of foreign-language training in our education system. Learning a foreign language not only supports the social and cultural development of a child; it also provides them significant economic advantages in an increasingly globalized and free-trade-oriented world. As such, it is deeply concerning to see that the York Catholic District School Board is once again considering cutting its Italian-language program. This program boasts a 40-year tradition. More than one million students in Ontario have studied Italian in Toronto and York region. In fact, Italian Ambassador Gian Cornado recently wrote directly to Premier Wynne urging the government to ensure the long-term sustainability of this program.

However, the school board has cited “funding reductions announced by the province” as a reason for the potential cut. This is unacceptable, given that the Auditor General recently found that the government has taken over \$80 million out of the classroom, effectively starving funding for programs such as this. I urge the government, specifically those MPPs representing York region, to do the right thing and fight for the preservation of the Italian-language program at this evening’s school board meeting.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further members’ statements?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I’ll start the clock over again.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. We’ve really taken a spiral when we’re starting to heckle each other in these circumstances.

The member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Michael Mantha: Well, Speaker, on a little bit of a lighter note, May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month. Stakeholders, organizations, Lyme advocates and various participants across the country hold events as a way to raise awareness and shine the light on the importance of Lyme disease.

In Ontario alone, we have several awareness events being held, such as one on May 17 when Niagara Falls was lit up Lyme green. On May 21, Albion Falls had special Lyme lighting. On May 22, the CN Tower was lit up to recognize chronic Lyme disease awareness. A few weeks ago, I participated in Lyme Ontario’s A Walk for Hope in Burlington. A Walk for Hope is not only for Lyme patients; it includes caregivers, families and friends. It is an opportunity for the Lyme community to gather together and show support for one another.

As Lyme disease grows, we continue to work together with a common goal, raising awareness for developing diagnosis and treatment options within Ontario and in Canada.

Often people ask me, “Why do you do this?” I do it for:

—Sarah Brunner, a nutritionist out of Thunder Bay;

—Doug Thompson, a maple syrup producer out of St. Joseph Island;

—Paige Spencer, a beautiful young girl out of Mississauga;

—Denis Villebrun, a father and grandfather out of Elliot Lake;

—Corinne and Sarah, two beautiful young ladies that I met in Burlington just a couple of weeks ago;

—Lyme support groups such as Ontario Lyme Alliance, Lyme Ontario and CanLyme; and

—a beautiful little boy from Thessalon, Austin Chillman, whom I met just a couple of weeks ago.

It’s easy to get involved. Several Ontarians have already taken up the challenge. I have taken the challenge, Mr. Speaker. Have you? Take a bite out of Lyme; it goes a long way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have no comment about that prop.

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SESSION TORONTO CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL

Mr. Han Dong: I’m pleased to rise today to acknowledge and celebrate the upcoming Session Toronto Craft Beer Festival that will be taking place in Toronto on June 11. The seventh annual craft beer festival will open Ontario Craft Beer Week, bringing brewers from all over the province to Toronto to showcase their unique beverages.

This morning, I was honoured to work in collaboration with 3 Brasseurs to make a very special brew of craft beer that will be entering this year’s craft beer festival. This special brew will bring a cultural aspect to the

festival by marrying a signature 3 Brewers ale with a special Chinese tea.

As the culture of craft beer continues to grow in Toronto and throughout Ontario, I'm excited to see this festival and many more like it coming to Trinity-Spadina. I would like to invite every member of this House to join me on June 11, and I encourage all Ontarians to come experience the festival first-hand. And remember: Always drink responsibly.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ONTARIO PROVINCIAL SPRING GAMES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the St. Thomas athletes who competed in the Special Olympics Ontario Provincial Spring Games. The games just took place May 26 to 28 in Guelph. The motto of this year's games was "Believe and Achieve," and it was one of the largest games held ever in Ontario, with six sports and over 900 athletes, coaches and team delegates. The sports included swimming, powerlifting, basketball, rhythmic dance and five- and 10-pin bowling.

I'm delighted to note that every athlete from St. Thomas achieved medal standing, and I would like to announce their names: Dan Robertson, five-pin bowling, silver; Matt Morrow, swimming, three gold, one silver; Zack Griffith, swimming, one gold; and Gordie Michie, swimming, four gold. Gordie is going to Rio for the Paralympic Games.

The St. Thomas Swish basketball team won a silver. Team members were Rahim Jamani, Pete Martens, Jason Spriggs, Nick Hansen, Dillon Calvert, Jarrod Pszonack, Isaac McDonnell-Gordon, Chris Freeman, captain Alex White, and coaches Trevor Armstrong and Dave Strickland.

Since the very first Special Olympic Games were held in Toronto in 1969, the organization has continued to grow, providing year-round sports training and athletic competition for individuals with intellectual disabilities. It's a wonderful opportunity for participants to demonstrate courage, experience joy and develop skills along with friendships along the way.

Once again, congratulations to all the athletes, and thank you to the coaches and volunteers that help make this a successful event.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not going to tell the member that my buddy Pete Charnish from Brantford had four golds and a silver. I'm not going to tell him that.

SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO UN ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Today marks the 10th anniversary of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act and World No Tobacco Day. On this 10th anniversary I want to extend congratulations to the University of Ottawa Heart Institute and their Ottawa model of smoking cessation. They were one of 10 recipients of the government of

Ontario's Heather Crowe awards that were presented earlier today. The purpose of the Heather Crowe Smoke-Free Ontario Award is to recognize individuals, groups and organizations across Ontario that have made a significant contribution towards the achievement of milestones and accomplishments of the smoke-free Ontario strategy in the past 10 years.

I also want to highlight the tremendous work done by my predecessor from the wonderful riding of Ottawa-Orléans in creating a smoke-free Ontario. Phil McNeely was a smoke-free advocate who proposed an amendment to the original Smoke-Free Ontario Act. The amendment that he proposed would ban having an open wall of cigarettes in convenience stores and retail businesses. The McNeely amendment was adopted and put into the Smoke-Free Ontario Act and has helped keep cigarettes out of sight of children.

Donc, en ce 10^e anniversaire de l'Ontario sans fumée, ainsi que la Journée mondiale sans tabac, je suis fière de ce qui a été accompli par la province afin d'assurer que la génération à venir pourra vivre dans un environnement sain.

SIKH MARTYRDOM PARADE

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to speak about a religious event this upcoming Sunday in my riding of Brampton-Springdale. This Sunday, the Gurdwara Guru Nanak Mission Centre in Brampton-Springdale will host their fifth annual parade to commemorate Sikh martyrdom.

Martyrdom in Sikhism represents an important element of the faith. The martyrdoms of Sikh gurus and those who followed are regarded as instructional ideals for Sikhs and have greatly influenced Sikh culture and Sikh practices.

The concept of martyrdom was made explicitly part of Sikh teachings by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The fifth guru, Guru Arjun Dev Ji is regarded as the first Sikh martyr. The later martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, who refused to convert to Islam in an effort to protect Hindu religious practice, is credited with making respect for freedom of conscience a key part of Sikh identity.

Our government has always had a long-standing respect for human rights and respect for religious freedoms. These rights are vital to us as Canadians, and those responsible for atrocities must be held accountable. As we remember the lives lost in 1984, we must remain vigilant that the basic human rights of all are respected and such tragedies are never repeated.

I invite everyone to join me and the Brampton-Springdale community at the Gurdwara Guru Nanak Mission Centre in commemorating the lives of the Sikh martyrs. The parade will be from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., and we will walk in memory of the shaheeds, those who lost their lives in the names of the Sikh faith during injustices against the religion. The annual parade highlights the concepts of religious freedom, freedom of expression, and value and tolerance in the Sikh faith.

I sincerely thank all residents and businesses in the neighbourhood for their support and co-operation and, once again, invite everyone to join us.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

ANNUAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform that House that I have today laid upon the table the Annual Energy Conservation Progress Report, 2015-16, from the Environmental Commissioner.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments, dated May 31, 2016, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): Mr. Tabuns from the Standing Committee on Social Policy presents the committee's report as follows and moves its adoption:

Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 186, An Act to establish the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan / Projet de loi 186, Loi établissant le Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 5, 2016, the bill is ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Grant Crack: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): Mr. Crack from the Standing Committee on General

Government presents the committee's report as follows and moves its adoption:

Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 178, An Act to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Projet de loi 178, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER AMENDMENT ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016

MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE DIRECTEUR DE LA RESPONSABILITÉ FINANCIÈRE

Ms. Fife moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 208, An Act to amend the Financial Accountability Officer Act, 2013 with respect to the Financial Accountability Officer's access to information / Projet de loi 208, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2013 sur le directeur de la responsabilité financière en ce qui concerne le droit d'accès à l'information du directeur de la responsabilité financière.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Currently, subsection 12(2) of the Financial Accountability Officer Act, 2013, prevents the Financial Accountability Officer from accessing certain cabinet records. This is replaced to entitle the Financial Accountability Officer to certain records or things belonging to or used by a ministry or public entity if the Financial Accountability Officer believes it to be necessary to perform his or her duties under the act, subject to the other exceptions in the act.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

LA VIOLENCE ET LE HARCÈLEMENT À CARACTÈRE SEXUEL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statements by ministries? Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, Speaker. I'll be speaking this afternoon as the minister responsible for women's issues.

I rise to recognize May as Sexual Assault Prevention Month and June 1 to 7 as Sexual Harassment Awareness Week in Ontario.

Je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour rappeler que mai est le Mois de la prévention de l'agression sexuelle et que la Semaine de sensibilisation au harcèlement sexuel se déroule du 1^{er} au 7 juin en Ontario.

Both of these occasions provide the opportunity to raise awareness of sexual violence and harassment and talk about what we're doing to stop them.

A year ago, the Premier announced Ontario's strong commitment to end sexual violence and harassment by releasing a three-year, \$41-million action plan entitled "It's Never Okay."

This past March, we released a progress report that shows we've had a busy and productive year. Phase 1 of the action plan's award-winning public education program is built around #WhoWillYouHelp. It shows a measurable increase in awareness about sexual violence and harassment. Our multimedia public education campaign sparked attention not just in Ontario but around the globe. Our ad campaign reached over 85 million people and our Facebook post reached over 1.9 million people, the highest ever for the Ontario government.

Among other supports for survivors, we've invested an additional \$1.1 million in annual funding over three years for hospital-based sexual and domestic violence treatment centres to maintain 24/7 access to appropriate and timely care. We stabilized and increased the annual investment by \$1.75 million for Ontario's 42 community-based sexual assault centres for services like crisis help lines, counselling and referrals.

Our work continues to build momentum, but there is still a long road ahead. The statistics are indeed sobering. One in three women will experience sexual violence in her lifetime. This can't continue. Many women who have survived sexual assault feel alone and isolated. They may be reluctant or afraid to come forward or to seek help and look for justice.

Our action plan is moving sexual assault and harassment out of the shadows. It's changing attitudes, providing more supports for survivors, and making workplaces and campuses safer and more responsive to complaints about sexual violence and harassment.

In the fall, we launched phase two of our public education campaign with #ItsNeverOkay or #JamaisAcceptable. The objective now is to remove any misconceptions around the grey areas so people know exactly what constitutes sexual violence and harassment.

On March 8, International Women's Day, the government passed legislation to support the action plan. The sexual violence and harassment action plan will increase safety in workplaces and on campuses and provide better support for survivors.

In February, the Premier made another strong commitment with the announcement of Walking Together:

Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and girls. Indigenous women experience significantly greater rates of domestic violence, assault, homicide and sexual exploitation. Through this new strategy, Ontario and indigenous communities have come together to end the cycle of violence and ensure that future generations of indigenous women can live the way they deserve, with safety and respect.

We are also firmly behind dismantling another destructive issue that affects Ontarians, and that is human trafficking. This is not an issue that happens somewhere else to people far away; human trafficking is going on right now and in our own backyards. Our government is working on a comprehensive strategy to fight human trafficking which is being developed with the help of survivors, indigenous partners, youth and labour partners.

Our approach for this strategy will first and foremost be survivor-centred. It will respond to the needs on the ground and focus on collaboration with other levels of government, women's groups, survivors, indigenous leaders, community services and justice partners.

I want to recognize our many partners who share our government's commitment to end sexual violence: women's organizations; diverse communities; our partners in the community, education, health and justice sectors; front-line workers; and members of Ontario's Roundtable on Violence Against Women and the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women.

Ensemble, nous ferons de l'Ontario un endroit où tout le monde peut vivre sans crainte de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère sexuel.

Together, we'll make Ontario a place where everyone can be free from the fear of sexual violence and harassment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's time for responses.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to speak to Sexual Assault Prevention Month.

For far too long, the issue of sexual harassment and sexual violence and assault have been hidden in the dark. Acknowledging that sexual assault happens is a first step toward addressing this issue. Many experts have said that "sexual violence" is an umbrella term, covering behaviours ranging from unwanted sexual advances or sexual touching to stalking and rape. It can also be psychological, conveyed through verbal threats and various forms of social media, such as we see on Twitter and Facebook.

It was back a year and a half or more ago that the Progressive Conservative caucus repeatedly pushed for the creation of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. We were happy when the government agreed to put that forward, and an all-party committee did a lot of hard work travelling across the province, from Thunder Bay to Windsor, Kingston, Sioux Lookout, Ottawa, Sudbury and of course many meetings here in Toronto, listening to survivors, to family members, to advocates, to health care providers, to the justice and social support workers.

Last December, the committee presented the final report that had many important recommendations and touched on many, many ministries. We know that sexual violence is pervasive and can happen in any part of Ontario at any time. The frequency of sexual violence was shocking and disheartening: one in three Canadian women will experience sexual assault in their lifetime, the majority of the victims being under the age of 25.

While there were 7,618 sexual assaults reported to police in Ontario in 2014, it is estimated that almost 90% of sexual assaults are not reported to the police. Our children and youth are particularly vulnerable. Our indigenous peoples, members of the LGBTQ community and newcomers are disproportionately targeted.

The Premier did say that our select committee's initiatives would complement their efforts against sexual violence and harassment. We hope to see more of this going forward because I think the select committee accomplished something that will hopefully benefit our province for years to come, and we hope that the government does complement, as the Premier said, the recommendations with the action plan that was brought forward.

I would like to acknowledge the "It's Never Okay" campaign and #WhoWillYouHelp, very successful public advertisements that promote the philosophy. We did support Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. We did make some recommendations in committee—we heard from 19 groups, actually, that wanted to include not only students but faculty and staff on campus who may find that they need support themselves against the sexual violence and harassment that have occurred upon them.

We were hoping that the government would take that into consideration. We had 11 amendments. They did not get through, but we hope that the government is still listening, because it is an issue that was brought up many times in committee.

I think we also owe it to the victims and survivors of sexual assault to protect them from being victimized and to help them heal. I've called on the government for better support of our probation and parole officers and for crown attorneys to be notified when offenders who are let out refuse to sign their orders. We saw, in Renfrew county, the example of three women who were murdered by a repeat offender.

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I know that the member sitting beside me, from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, brought forward Bill 130, which called for electronic monitoring of sexual or domestic violence offenders when released on parole. I think that is something we need to act on quickly to prevent more deaths from occurring, especially of vulnerable women—it's especially a factor in rural Ontario, where services just aren't as close. We hope that the minister can institute some of those suggestions we have brought forward.

I know that human trafficking was mentioned today. I really appreciate the minister's mentioning human

trafficking, which is an alarming example of sexual violence and harassment, with over 90% of the victims being Canadian-born. I brought both a motion and a bill before the Legislature. It has been passed, and I know that the minister mentioned they are going to release the plan in June, so I look forward to that. I'm really pleased that they addressed that today.

I just want to conclude by thanking all the tireless work of front-line service providers and victim services, including my own in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, which provide an invaluable service.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to rise, as women's issues critic on behalf of the Ontario NDP caucus, to respond to the minister's statement on Sexual Assault Prevention Month.

I want to begin by offering my profound thanks and lasting admiration for the difficult and draining work that front-line workers do in sexual assault centres, rape crisis centres and violence against women agencies across the province to prevent sexual violence and raise awareness of sexual assault. Most of all, I want to thank them for their commitment to listening to survivors, believing what they say and helping them move forward with compassion and empathy.

I also want to acknowledge survivors of sexual assault for their courage in sharing their stories, their willingness to support each other and their determination to end sexual violence and abuse.

In addition to awareness activities that have been undertaken as part of Sexual Assault Prevention Month and throughout this past year, this May saw sexual assault front and centre on the media and public agenda. The month began with the brave disclosure by Temerra Dixon of the trauma she experienced because of the doctor who sexually abused her and three other female patients. Temerra went public because of the disciplinary panel's decision to allow the doctor to keep his licence and continue to practise after being found guilty.

Speaker, there can be no question that groping and any physical contact between physicians and their patients constitutes sexual assault. It represents a shocking betrayal of trust and a violation of a physician's duty of care. But, while current legislation makes revocation of a physician's licence mandatory for nearly every other form of sexual abuse, there is no automatic revocation in the case of sexual touching. This is wrong, Speaker, and it has to change. Doctors who molest their patients should not be allowed to continue to practise.

Ontario patients and advocates have been calling for years for this legal loophole to change. The College of Physicians and Surgeons has joined the call for amendments to revoke the licences of all doctors who abuse. A year and a half ago, the government created a task force to study this issue. The study is complete, but the report is sitting on the minister's desk. The longer the government refuses to release the report, the longer patients, especially female patients, will remain unprotected from this kind of sexual assault.

This past month also saw the Ghomeshi trial come to a close with the signing of a peace bond, the issuing of an

apology to Kathryn Borel and the withdrawal of the sexual assault charge against him. This reignited the public discussion about sexual violence and the justice system that has been playing out in the media and in living rooms across the nation for more than a year. What the Ghomeshi spectacle reveals is the grim reality behind the statistics of sexual assault and why so many sexual assault survivors do not report their assaults to the police. They fear not being believed; they fear being judged for what they did or what they wore; they fear being re-victimized and re-traumatized by the criminal justice process.

I hope that this month marks the moment when the government acknowledges the complete failure of our current legal system to deal with sexual assault. Independent legal advice for sexual assault survivors is a good start, but I urge this government to do more. I urge this government to implement the recommendations of the all-party Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, to provide dedicated legal representation for survivors, access to sexual assault courts and restorative justice, and extensive training for all involved.

More importantly, when 19 out of 20 victims of sexual assault choose not to go through the justice system, we need prevention and we need support that enables survivors to heal.

My private member's bill, Bill 177, which passed second reading in this Legislature in March with all-party support, is a critical piece of the support that is needed. My bill would provide up to 10 days of paid leave for workers who have experienced sexual violence or domestic violence to seek medical attention, to access counselling, to relocate, to talk to police and lawyers, or go to court. My bill would also require mandatory workplace training on sexual violence and domestic violence. I urge this Liberal government to move my bill through committee or to reintroduce it as government legislation.

One out of three Ontario women will experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. Most will be under the age of 25. Most will know the person who attacked them. The overwhelming majority will not report their assault to the police. We can and must do better to prevent sexual violence from occurring and to put in place appropriate supports to allow survivors to heal from the harm they experienced.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank Amanda and Sam LeGoueff, OPSEU and members of Local 434, and the council and citizens of North Grenville and neighbouring municipalities, for their support of the #SayNoToThe

Close campaign and this petition, with over 8,600 signatures.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services has announced it is closing the ServiceOntario centre in the town of Kemptville in February 2017; and

"Whereas Kemptville is one of the fastest-growing communities in eastern Ontario with hundreds of housing starts and millions of dollars of investment in recent years; and

"Whereas the community has several businesses, including automobile dealerships, that face increased costs and inconvenience to their customers if they lose direct access to a local ServiceOntario centre; and

"Whereas closing Kemptville's ServiceOntario centre would cause unnecessary hardship to young families and seniors who do not have Internet access or transportation to attend a ServiceOntario location outside of the community; and

"Whereas the government has provided no information or a business case to support its sudden decision;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Government and Consumer Services immediately reverse the decision to close Kemptville's ServiceOntario centre and ensure residents of this fast-growing community can access government services where they live."

I support this petition 100%, will sign it and send it to the table with page Alexandra.

CROWN ATTORNEYS

Ms. Sarah Campbell: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas all Ontarians deserve fair and equitable access to justice as a basic right;

"Whereas the former crown attorney for the Rainy River district has retired and the Ministry of the Attorney General has not yet appointed a new, permanent crown attorney for the district;

"Whereas the Premier of Ontario has said that she does 'not have the time frame' for when a new crown attorney will be appointed;

"Whereas the Attorney General said, 'No final determination has been made regarding the permanent filling of the crown attorney position;'

"Whereas statistics show that the crown attorney of the Rainy River district has the highest case load per capita in northern Ontario;

"Whereas a temporary crown attorney from another district may not understand the needs and dynamics of the Rainy River district, in particular the specific needs of First Nations communities;

"Whereas the towns of Fort Frances and Atikokan, the Fort Frances chief secretariat, the Rainy River District Municipal Association, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, the local law association and numerous residents of the Rainy River district have called upon the

Ministry of the Attorney General to reappoint a permanent, resident crown attorney for Rainy River;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize the needs of the residents of the Rainy River district and the numerous First Nations communities of northwestern Ontario by appointing a permanent, resident crown attorney for the Rainy River district."

I wholeheartedly support this, will affix my signature and give it to page Katelyn to deliver to the table.

MEN'S HEALTH

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition here that I know that the Minister of Culture and Sport agrees with.

"Whereas men's health is an integral component of population health, affecting Ontario families, communities, businesses and society;

"Whereas many men's health issues—if not all—benefit from early diagnosis, which is most often achieved through proactive monitoring of health and regular examinations;

"Whereas the stigma associated with a number of men's health issues, and the failure to conduct regular physical examinations, can be at least partially mitigated through increased public awareness and the sharing of personal stories;

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"Whereas June is a special and significant month for men and their families, with the third Sunday in June recognized internationally as Father's Day;

"Whereas groups like the Canadian Men's Health Foundation are developing innovative tools and programs, like the YouCheck health awareness tool, that could be promoted during a dedicated awareness week;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To support increased awareness and advocacy of men's health issues by working towards passage and adoption of Bill 170, An Act to proclaim the week immediately preceding the third Sunday in June as Men's Health Awareness Week."

It's an excellent idea. I agree with this petition. I'll leave it with Colleen and send it to the table.

CHILDREN'S IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

Mr. Todd Smith: I have a petition here dropped off at my Toronto office from residents across Ontario.

"A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the province of Ontario has a plan and/or action to amend the legislation under the Immunization of School Pupils Act ... regarding religious and conscientious exemption regulations;

"Whereas the proposed and/or tabled amendment requiring 'education sessions' interferes with our informed consent rights as specified in Ontario's Health Care Consent Act, 1996, specifically 'Elements of

consent' 11(1)3, 'The consent must be given voluntarily' and 4, 'The consent must not be obtained through misrepresentation or fraud;'

"Whereas the proposed and/or tabled amendment interferes with our constitutional rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

"Whereas vaccines are injected, complex biochemical compounds that carry a risk of injury and death;

"Whereas the province of Ontario and the government of Canada take no responsibility for vaccine injuries and deaths;

"Whereas education sessions are a waste of limited health care dollars that could be better spent elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Cease the passing of any legislation under the Immunization of School Pupils Act that would require Ontario residents who have made a religious or conscientious decision to exempt their child from any or all vaccinations under the act:

"(1) to submit to an 'education session' or

"(2) to submit to any other coerced and/or forced measures under the ISPA."

I'll send this to the table with page Jacob.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the death of a child is one of the most painful events that a person can experience. Parents whose child dies as a result of illness or injury do not have statutory leave, nor job protection while taking a leave to recover from such a loss, in the province of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 175, Jonathan's Law (Employee Leave of Absence When Child Dies), 2016."

I agree with this petition. I sign it and I will give it to page Nava for submission.

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"One in five Ontario schoolchildren has asthma;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on ... private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a lung health advisory council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues; and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario lung health action plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and"

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41" through third and final reading.

I agree with the petition and put my name on it.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the" Liberal government of Ontario "is proposing to force all Ontarians using natural gas energy for their homes or businesses to switch to more expensive electricity; and

"Whereas for the 76% of homes and businesses in Ontario that heat with natural gas, switching to electricity will increase their home energy bills by more than \$3,000 per year; and

"Whereas the elimination of affordable natural gas will devastate family budgets and destroy the province's natural gas industry; and

"Whereas the plan to ban the use of natural gas in Ontario is just one small part of" this Liberal government's "radical environmental agenda that is threatening the jobs and financial well-being of hundreds of thousands of Ontario residents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the" Liberal government and "Premier Wynne immediately scrap this plan and instead allow Ontario residents and businesses the freedom to use natural gas to meet their heating and energy needs."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this and will send this down with Thomas to the table.

ACCIDENT BENEFITS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: In light of the cuts that are going to happen to our benefits in auto insurance tomorrow, I have a petition requesting the end of previous cuts. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario Regulation 347/13 has made four changes to the Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule (SABS), also known as Ontario Regulation 34/10 effective Feb 1, 2014. These regulations have considerably reduced the dollar amounts allocated for patients receiving assessments and treatment following a motor vehicle accident; ...

"Whereas this petition is to validate that the \$3,500 minor injury guideline monetary fund is an insufficient amount to enable auto accident patients with soft tissue

injury ... to reach optimal recovery to their pre-accident status...;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To remove the minor injury guideline, sections 18(1) and 18(2) of the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule and incorporate rebuttal examination reports back into the system."

I agree with this petition, Mr. Speaker, and I will affix my signature.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition here addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

"Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that community water fluoridation is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations, including the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Ontario Dental Association; and

"Whereas recent experience in Canadian cities that have removed fluoride from drinking water has led directly to a dramatic increase in tooth decay; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care urges support for amending the Fluoridation Act to ensure community water fluoridation is mandatory; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing urges support for the removal of provisions allowing Ontario municipalities to cease drinking water fluoridation, or fail to start drinking water fluoridation, from the Ontario Municipal Act;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Premier of Ontario direct the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Health and Long-Term Care to amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario before the end of the first session of the current Ontario Parliament."

I agree with these signatures, affix my name and give it to Emma to bring to the table.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further petitions? The member from Northumberland—Quinte West—no. Sorry. Prince Edward—Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: That's good. You're new here.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas demonstration schools in Ontario provide ... necessary support for children with special education needs;

"Whereas the current review by the government of Ontario of demonstration schools and other special education programs has placed a freeze on student intake and the hiring of teaching staff;

"Whereas children in need of specialized education and their parents require access to demonstration schools and other essential support services;

"Whereas freezing student intake is unacceptable as it leaves the most vulnerable students behind;

"Whereas this situation could result in the closure of many specialized education programs, depriving children with special needs of their best opportunity to learn;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately reinstate funding streams for demonstration schools and other specialized education services for the duration of the review and to commit to ensuring every student in need is allowed the chance to receive an education and achieve their potential."

I agree with this, will sign it and send it to the table with page Colleen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank the newer member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

LYME DISEASE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further petitions? The member from Manitoulin—Algoma—Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: You are new again, Mr. Speaker. Nice try.

This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario does not have a strategy on Lyme disease; and

"Whereas the Public Health Agency of Canada is developing an Action Plan on Lyme Disease; and

1550

"Whereas Toronto Public Health says that transmission of the disease requires the tick to be attached for 24 hours, so early intervention and diagnosis is of primary importance; and

"Whereas a motion was introduced to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario encouraging the government to adopt a strategy on Lyme disease, while taking into account the impact the disease has upon individuals and families in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to develop an integrated strategy on Lyme disease consistent with the action plan of the Public Health Agency of Canada, taking into account available treatments, accessibility issues and the efficacy of the currently available diagnostic mechanisms. In so doing, it should consult with representatives of the health care community and patients' groups within one year." It's now two.

I agree with this petition and sign my name to it.

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have another petition here, and this comes to me from King City. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"One in five Ontario schoolchildren has asthma;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on ... private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a lung health advisory council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues" and to immediately debate it at committee and then expedite its passage to third and final reading.

I agree with the petition and give it to Colleen to bring down to the table with my signature on it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time for petitions has now expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPORTING ONTARIO'S TRAILS ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE SOUTIEN AUX SENTIERS DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Coteau moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act to enact the Ontario Trails Act, 2016 and to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 100, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur les sentiers de l'Ontario et modifiant diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the minister. You may begin debate.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's been a real golden year for sport here in Ontario. We've had some incredible high-profile events, like the NBA all-star game and the thrill that has been brought forward with the Blue Jays' successful season last year and, of course, the Raptors' season finale this year. It's been a very successful year for sport here in the province of Ontario.

There's been a real boost of enthusiasm among sport enthusiasts of all ages, in all communities across the province. It really leaves a strong legacy of success. Our government is committed to building on that legacy. We want to help every Ontarian lead a healthy and active life.

Earlier this year we launched Game ON, our action plan for amateur sport here in the province. The goal of this strategy is to provide strong support for sport participation and community recreation, with the goal of

helping our elite athletes develop their talent and ensuring everyone has the chance to enjoy sport here in the province. A particular focus in the first year of the sport plan is helping women, newcomers and members in indigenous communities gain better access to the sport and recreation opportunities that they deserve.

Our priority as a government is to help all Ontarians lead a healthier, more fulfilling life. To that end, I'm very proud to speak for the third time on the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2016, which, if passed, would help improve, sustain and promote Ontario's urban, suburban, rural and remote land and water trails.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I will be sharing my time today with the parliamentary assistant, the member from Kingston and the Islands, who I have to say has done an excellent job working not only on this bill but also on many things in relation to tourism, culture and sport. Thank you.

The parliamentary assistant will be discussing in more detail the extensive consultation process that we put in place as a government to develop this important piece of proposed legislation.

I'd like to address how we're supporting the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2016. If passed, it would increase access to our network of trails here in Ontario and, as a result, will support both a healthier and more prosperous province.

I want to take a moment to thank everyone who has provided input to developing this legislation. This includes trail providers, trail users and, of course, stakeholders.

The MPP for Kingston and the Islands will illustrate that the bill we are discussing here today is a result of consultations and collaboration that have taken place over many, many years, with the creation of the Ontario Trails Strategy back in 2005.

In the fall of 2013, the ministry led province-wide consultations looking at different ways our government could strengthen the original strategy to address outstanding concerns and advance Ontario's trail system for future generations. There were five regional consultations that took place, in Ottawa, Ingersoll, Toronto, Thunder Bay and North Bay. We had two of these consultations within indigenous communities, which were held in Toronto and Thunder Bay, and we talked to representatives from 80 municipalities and 48 trail organizations, health organizations, indigenous communities, tourism organizations and many, many more.

Eighty submissions were received through the Environmental Registry during a 48-day consultation period. We heard about issues from people on the ground—people directly involved in protecting, growing and making use of our trail system.

We talked about issues around liability, securing land for trails, trespassing, protecting private and public property, and more.

We discussed opportunities that our trail systems hold as one of our greatest treasures here in Ontario, and we were encouraged to pursue ways to promote trails,

conduct research, share best practices and expand our water trail opportunities.

The bill that is before the House is the product of more than a decade of ongoing consultation and collaboration with the people of Ontario, and is a response to stakeholders with real interest in the future of Ontario's trails.

Stakeholders told us that we need to find ways to better promote awareness around our trails. We want to begin with improving access to and awareness of Ontario trails for every resident and visitor. If passed, Mr. Speaker, this legislation would proclaim an annual Trails Week here in Ontario. It would coincide with International Trails Day, which takes place in June.

International Trails Day is an annual celebration of trails to promote their development and use and healthier lifestyles. This year, that particular day takes place on June 4, so it's coming up very shortly.

This bill, if passed, would allow for the recognition of Ontario trails of distinction, to increase trail awareness and local tourism. Ontario trails of distinction would be promoted on the government of Ontario website.

Future consultations would be required in the course of establishing voluntary best practices, and targets and classification systems, as well as establishing a process for recognizing these incredible trails of distinction. These consultations would be conducted with provincial ministries, our agencies, municipalities, indigenous communities, stakeholders and others that have an interest in trails.

In the end, if passed, the Supporting Ontario Trails Act would make it simpler for trail users to find out about trails that best suit them. It would find out what their expectations were around those trails and, of course, this classification system would have the ability to match their abilities with a specific trail.

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By establishing a voluntary classification system for trails, we would be able to promote trails and provide useful and consistent information to Ontarians and visitors here in Ontario. It would promote consistency across the province while maintaining flexibility to allow for different types of trails. The simple one-step method for hikers, cyclists, snowmobilers and ATV riders to plan their trail experience would allow them to choose the route that provides them with the level of challenge and adventure that suits them. It would make user access easier and cultivate trails tourism, further supported by encouraging best practice sharing related to, for example, trail management and signage.

One other important way to encourage the number of trail users is by adding clarity to the Occupiers' Liability Act. Currently, there is some legal ambiguity around what standard of care is owed to users of trails. For example, if an ATV club charges a membership fee for coordinating rides on a portion of the Ontario trail network, it is legally questionable what level of trail care is required from the owner of the trail. If passed, Bill 100 would clarify the standard of care required by not-for-profits and public owners and managers of trails. Trail

organizations and managers must still seek out permission from the landowners. The proposed amendments to the Occupiers' Liability Act would help make owners more comfortable with giving such permission by clarifying that the users of the free marked recreational trails use them at their own discretion and their own risk, even if the owner or occupier of the trail gets money from the government for other reasons, such as levies or charging parking fees. If passed, Bill 100 would clarify legislation, encouraging further partnerships between businesses and owners of trails.

There has been a lot of discussion on how landowners' rights will be protected under this proposed piece of legislation. I'd like to stress the fact that the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act makes a firm commitment to protecting landowners. Many trails cross private lands with access freely given by the landowners to share their properties with trail users. Trespassing and damages caused by trespassers is a great concern, and recouping damages can be a very difficult process, often forcing a landowner to file a land claim in court. If passed, Bill 100 would streamline the process by which landowners can claim damages caused to their property. The legislation, if passed, would also strengthen the consequences of trespassing on private or agricultural land. It would increase the fines that may be imposed on trespassers from \$2,000 to \$10,000, consistent with other provincial statutes. It would also respond to requests from stakeholders like the Ontario Federation of Agriculture by removing the ceiling on damages that can be claimed as part of the prosecution.

This legislation acknowledges the need to protect private landowners against damage. We recognize the essential role of property owners in sustaining our trails here in the province of Ontario. By making it easier for property owners to recoup damages, we anticipate that there will be an increase in the number of property owners willing to allow easements on their property.

Easements, Mr. Speaker, have been probably the most contentious piece in this piece of legislation since its introduction. We had a lot of discussion around easements, and I think we've landed in a place which will allow people to be satisfied. In this House and among the public, there have been questions regarding the benefits of these amendments and a perception that the proposed legislation would lead to forced easements and a loss of control by landowners over their property. I want to take this opportunity to restate, for the record, that Bill 100 provides landowners and eligible bodies an additional option to consider with respect to trails. In no way will this bill force anyone into easements. I just want to be clear here: In no way will this bill force anyone into easements.

The bill provides that landowners may grant an easement to an eligible body for trail-related purposes. Easements granted by owners under the proposed legislation would still have to be negotiated between the willing landowner and the eligible bodies, and be registered on the title to the land. The landowner and the eligible body

both have to agree in writing to the terms of the easement. The proposed legislation requires an easement contract to address assignment of the easement from one eligible body to another. It also clarifies the process for assigning an easement from one eligible body to another.

No property owner in Ontario will ever be compelled to provide an easement. The easement is 100% voluntary.

The proposed legislation, if passed, also strengthens the protection of Ontario's public lands. In support of the stand-alone Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015, the Public Lands Act would be amended to protect public lands and property from damage, and strengthen compliance and enforcement under the act. If passed, changes would make damages to crown land and property an offence, and damage would be defined in subsequent regulation.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry would also be able to rehabilitate the land and repair the damage and recover its costs through the court system. A court would be able to order the offender to rehabilitate the lands and repair any damage to crown land or property. Fines under the act would be increased and amendments would also allow the court to impose any additional fines where there has been monetary benefit from the commission of the offence under the act. The act would be amended to increase the length of time in which a person could lay charges, up to a maximum of five years from the date of the offence. Enforcement officers would be provided with new enforcement tools to stop vehicles, inspect documents and arrest persons suspected or caught violating this act.

We want to ensure that private and public lands remain protected and undamaged. This benefits landowners, Ontario taxpayers, the environment and every single person that uses our trail system. Protection of our trails allows for greater access, and that encourages an active lifestyle which promotes a culture of physical and mental wellness. In 2014, a survey was conducted by the ministry that reported that over 90% of trail users here in Ontario believe that trail use and being part of that trail system had a positive impact on their physical and mental health.

Our trails are good for our physical and mental health, and they're good for Ontario tourism and our economy. We know that the tourism sector here in the province of Ontario contributes over \$28 billion back into our economy and supports over 350,000 jobs. I have to say, as a side note, that a lot of those jobs go to young people here in the province of Ontario. Our trail tourism is significant and it's a growing part of that number.

In 2014, Ontario hikers spent more than \$1.6 billion, including more than \$900 million on day hiking expenditures and almost \$700 million on overnight hiking expenditures. That translates into more than \$500 million added to the Ontario GDP, and more than 18,000 jobs and \$800 million in labour income; a total economic benefit to Ontario of almost \$1.4 billion, plus \$259 million in total provincial taxes.

Those are good reasons for all of us in this Legislature to support this proposed legislation. That's why we've

invested, as a government, \$130 million in both direct and indirect funding to support Ontario trails between 2009 and 2015, and that's why we continue to invest in trails. That's why we supported connecting the gaps in the Trans Canada Trail to create 2,000 kilometres of continuous trail here in Ontario as part of the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games legacy. That's why we invested in the creation of the William G. Davis—Bill Davis—Trail, as well as the Waterfront Trail, which has approximately 1,600 kilometres of trail, and a new vision for the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail.

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That's why I'm so proud to take the lead on this proposed legislation. The Supporting Ontario's Trails Act will help build both a healthier and more prosperous Ontario.

Ontario's fantastic network of trails is the result of hard work and the time of volunteers and members of trail clubs and other not-for-profit organizations. It is a result of our private property owners' willingness to share their properties with trail users. It's an important bill that would not have been possible without so much participation and so many passionate stakeholders whose input led to the shaping of this bill and the amendments.

If passed, this bill will ensure better management of trail activity. It will protect public land and private property by modernizing stewardship, compliance and enforcement tools. I am confident that, if passed, the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015, will be universally recognized as a landmark piece of legislation. I encourage all members of this House to show their support for Bill 100, to recognize the significance of our world-class trail system and to protect and sustain this treasure for future generations of Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The minister did state that he's sharing his time. I recognize the member from Kingston and the Islands.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I have to say that it is a pleasure to share my time today with my colleague the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Before he runs away, I also want to say what a pleasure it is to work with him, not only on Bill 100, but also on the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. You've been an inspiration to work with, and I thank you very much.

As the minister has stated, the proposed Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015, is important for Ontario and the future of our province's health and well-being, economic prosperity, and natural and cultural heritage resources.

This bill, if passed, will support the protection, development and promotion of thousands of kilometres of trails for the public to use, often free of charge, now and for generations to come. Our trails give millions of Ontarians and visitors access to unforgettable experiences in natural and built settings, including some of the most treasured and protected outdoor areas in the world.

Sustaining Ontario's urban, suburban, rural and remote land and water trails is an obligation we have to our children. It's an obligation our government takes very

seriously. We have proudly supported the development of our trail networks for many years, and I want to take a moment to briefly outline some of our work to date.

Since 2005, we have established the Ontario Trails Coordinating Committee to oversee the implementation of the Ontario Trails Strategy. We've mapped approximately 4,000 trailheads, representing over 21,000 kilometres of trails across Ontario. We funded a variety of local, regional and provincial trail projects, improved accessibility for people with disabilities, developed an award-winning central website for trails and added more than 250 kilometres of trail through Ontario's Pan Am and Parapan Am Games Promotion, Celebration and Legacy Strategy. From 2009 to 2015, our government invested over \$130 million in both direct and indirect funding to support our trails system here in the province of Ontario.

This proposed legislation would, if passed, build on these achievements, supporting the closing of our existing gaps in our trails networks and promoting the enhancement in the quality of Ontario's trails. The Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015, would proclaim an annual Trails Week and allow for the establishment of voluntary best practices, a trails classification system and the recognition of trails of distinction. It would require that a trails strategy be maintained and reviewed periodically and set out a mechanism for trail easements.

If passed, supporting provisions would include amendments to the Occupiers' Liability Act, the Public Lands Act, the Trespass to Property Act and other complementary amendments.

I would like to speak in a little more detail about the thorough process of consultation that was essential to the creation of this comprehensive legislation. I think we can all agree that the strong democratic institutions we cherish are built on the values of open government, because while the people of Ontario look to the government for strong leadership, we know that leadership depends on ensuring open government, and open government depends on consultation.

Our government believes that developing important policy demands a direct, substantive and influential role for Ontarians in shaping policies and decisions that affect them. Effective leadership also means making the right choices and defending the right of Ontarians today and in the future to the services they rely on and to enjoy safe, clean and healthy communities that support active living for all.

The Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2015, is the result of more than a decade of effective and extensive consultation and collaboration—a richly informative dialogue. This was done to solicit meaningful input from the full range of trail stakeholders, input that provided representative and balanced perspective on issues and opportunities.

In December of 2004, the then Minister of Tourism and Recreation, the Honourable Jim Bradley, established a minister's advisory committee on trails representing 22 stakeholder organizations and chaired by MPP Tim

Peterson, the parliamentary assistant to the minister. Participating organizations included the Ontario Trails Council, the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs, the Northern Ontario Native Tourism Association, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the Bruce Trail Conservancy, Conservation Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability, and others.

Over the winter of 2005, approximately 1,000 stakeholders with special expertise attended nine workshops and 14 regional consultations to provide input on topics such as active living and promoting access, environmental and heritage impacts, tourism potential, economic sustainability, and landowner concerns. The resulting Ontario Trails Strategy released that year supported continued co-operation among governments and the not-for-profit and private sectors towards a shared vision for trails. The strategy established strategic directions for planning, managing, promoting and using trails in Ontario.

Still, there remained long-standing trail issues that needed to be addressed, including the need for a legislative mechanism to establish trail easements, clarifying liability and the standard of trail care required by not-for-profit and public organizations, and increasing allowable compensation for damage to property due to trespassing.

Our government also wanted to respond to stakeholder calls for improving the opportunities for trails tourism and the enhanced management, promotion and use of trails.

There was also a need to enhance the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's ability to manage trails on crown land by providing greater compliance and enforcement options and by creating an offence for damage to crown land and property. Damage would be defined in a subsequent regulation.

Province-wide consultations began in 2013, including two indigenous engagement sessions and five regional sessions. Across the province, we heard the concerns and priorities of our different trail partners. Sessions were attended by over 250 individuals, which included representatives from 80 municipalities, 48 trail organizations, 42 other not-for-profit institutions, 17 health organizations, 12 tourism organizations and eight conservation authorities, among many others.

1620

We also received 80 submissions through the Environmental Registry. Through these consultations and submissions, stakeholders identified liability as a top priority, with calls for greater clarity in the Occupiers' Liability Act. Securing land for trails was also identified by stakeholders as a top priority, with continued support for trail-specific easements that are not costly or complicated.

Trespassing has always been an issue, and stakeholders emphasized that various types of trespassing should be considered; for example, intentional versus unintentional trespassing and motorized as compared to non-motorized users.

Stakeholders also called for increased compensation for damage to property. All stakeholders wanted to see strong protection of private and public property.

Some stakeholders called for more training and stronger provincial coordination of trail standards related to the planning, design and maintenance of signage.

The feedback we received also advocated the inclusion of trails in the provincial policy statement and other land use policies.

There were calls for a code of ethics to reduce conflict among trail users.

We also heard about the need for a trails classification system by trail type, difficulty and so on, along with more standardized trail signage.

Stakeholders pointed out some great opportunities to enhance trails tourism and promote trails, including water trail opportunities, and to strengthen the role of trails in active transportation.

There were calls for trail-specific research with a trails inventory and a repository of trail data and best practices, and studies of the environmental impact of different user groups.

Mr. Speaker, the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2016, was designed to address these issues in a comprehensive way, and it's been developed in collaboration with 12 other ministries.

This past May 4, I sat on the Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly on Bill 100. The stakeholder testimony we received was invaluable and resulted in further important amendments to the legislation.

We heard from Bill Mungall of Hike Ontario, who told me that the changes under Bill 100 will improve the sustainability of Ontario's trails system for the future. We heard from Mike Clewer from the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs, who's actually visiting with us today. I know Mike appreciated that we incorporated their feedback from previous consultation sessions in the bill and was very happy with the changes to the Motorized Snow Vehicles Act to help reduce the burden of insurance claims.

Patrick Connor from the Ontario Trails Council also praised the change to trespassing and damage penalties, and the improved clarity and safeguards for the Occupiers' Liability Act, enabling provincial bodies and organizations to have a reduced duty while benefiting from provincial programs encouraging their activity, such as sharing licence fees collected by the province.

Peter Jeffery, speaking on behalf of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, supported the removal of the ceiling on damages caused by trespassers, recoverable as part of the prosecution, something which Bill 100 eliminates.

The Essex Region Conservation Authority was very supportive of the many aspects already in the bill. Richard Wyma praised the initiatives on Trails Week, trails of distinction and the trail classification system as positive items that will support Ontario's trail network.

Mr. Speaker, if passed, the act would help the trails community more effectively develop, operate and

promote trails by addressing long-standing land access liability, trespassing and protection-of-property challenges. As enabling legislation, it would provide the government with the authority to provide guidance to the trail sector on promotion initiatives to increase awareness and regional tourism.

If passed, the legislation would proclaim an annual trails week in Ontario to coincide with International Trails Day in June.

Amendments would respond to stakeholder requests for a mechanism to promote trails more effectively and ensure consistency across the province. The proposed legislation would position the province as a leader in the development, management and promotion of trails in Canada. Through an ongoing process of consultation, the proposed legislation would allow for the establishment of voluntary best practices. It would establish a classification system as well as a process for recognizing trails of distinction. It would require the publication of the name of every trail recognized as an Ontario trail of distinction on a government of Ontario website, along with a trail classification system and best practices and targets, if established.

At standing committee, Patrick Connor of the Ontario Trails Council praised the measures on voluntary best practices, saying how important it is to recognize those with expert knowledge, knowledge of the sector, and an understanding of the commitment that these community leaders are making.

The voluntary classification system could be used to promote trails and provide useful and consistent information to Ontarians and visitors. It would help users find the right trail for their skill level and their interests, designating trails according to the level of difficulty, similar to downhill ski hills with the black diamond and other designations. Trails could be classified on the basis of permitted uses—hiking or snowmobiling, for example—and could include multi-use trail categories. Other factors could include accessibility and amenities.

A process for recognition would be developed for the trail classification system at a later time through consultation with provincial ministries, agencies, municipalities, indigenous communities, stakeholders and others that have an interest in trails. Voluntary best practices could include trail management and signage, which would ensure consistency across the province while allowing for flexibility due to different types of trails or varying capacity of trail operators. If widely adopted, voluntary best practices could help promote trails more effectively, and educating trail users on their responsibilities would help protect the rights of landowners.

The legislation recognizing the Ontario trails of distinction would increase trail awareness and local tourism, responding to stakeholder requests for a mechanism to promote trails more effectively. Our government looks to achieve this goal through the proposed standalone Supporting Ontario's Trails Act, 2016, and through proposed amendments to five laws across several different ministries.

Our primary partners in the development of this legislation have been the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the Ministry of the Attorney General. The legislative proposals include changes to the Public Lands Act, the Occupiers' Liability Act and the Trespass to Property Act, as well as the complementary amendments to the Motorized Snow Vehicles Act and Off-Road Vehicles Act. The Public Lands Act would be amended to protect public lands and property from damage and to strengthen compliance and enforcement under the act.

We worked with committee members to develop changes to the bill to address the concerns that we heard. The granting of an easement has always been voluntary. It remains voluntary under the proposed legislation. I want to stress that, if passed, the bill would now include a clear statement of the voluntary nature of granting an easement under this act by an owner of the land.

1630

We added language that clearly articulates that easements are voluntary, that requires easement contracts to address what types of activities can take place on the easement, including hiking and snowmobiling, and that requires contracts to address any restrictions on the transfer of the easement from one group to another and clarifies how the process of transferring an easement should properly take place. These changes should reassure owners of land who are interested in having a trail easement on their property but who have concerns about how their land might be used or are concerned about a change of the original eligible body.

Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to work closely with ministries and stakeholders who have an interest in trails or trail-related activities as we move forward. If passed, Bill 100 incorporates the goals of the Ontario Trails Strategy into the legislation and requires its periodic review. That ongoing consultation extends to the mechanism for trail easements. I want to clarify once more that Bill 100 does not change the public process for getting an easement. Any easement sought must follow the Planning Act, and that means a public process. It means going to the municipality, the landowner and the trail organization, and applying for consent and posting and circulating to neighbouring landowners. So the process of consultation is embedded into the legislation. No one will ever be able to register an easement on someone's land without their knowledge.

As such, Bill 100 reflects our government's ongoing commitment to consultation as the foundation on which the democratic process is built. Prior to introduction, we engaged with stakeholders. During the debate and at committee, we listened and accepted amendments to Bill 100. And, finally, if the bill is passed, there will be continued and ongoing discussions with landowners, trail users and organizations, as well as with the broader trail community.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, the passage of this legislation would help deliver on the government's commitment to implement a refreshed Ontario Trails Strategy, including the introduction of trails legislation.

We are proud of what this legislation can accomplish, if passed. Mr. Speaker, if passed, the legislation we are proposing addresses many long-standing issues, such as securing long-term access to the land, liability, protection of property, and trespassing. Trail organizations, municipalities, the provincial government and other organizations, as well as indigenous communities, farmers and the general public, will all benefit. We will work together to ensure that trails are safe, accessible spaces where Ontarians of all ages and abilities can enjoy being active in Ontario's beautiful outdoor settings.

Trails contribute to our economy, benefit our environment and improve our health and our mental health. The Supporting Ontario Trails Act, 2015, would protect and improve thousands of kilometres of the province's trails system while encouraging its expansion. Our government is proud to help protect and expand Ontario's trails system. I call on all members here to join us in that effort by passing this bill today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Further debate? I recognize the member for Leeds–Grenville.

Applause.

Mr. Steve Clark: As Ontario PC critic for tourism, culture and sport, I'm honoured to rise. I want to thank everyone for their generous applause for the third reading debate for Bill 100, the Supporting Ontario Trails Act, 2015.

I do want to say at the outset, Speaker, that I'll be sharing my time this afternoon with the following members: Carleton–Mississippi Mills, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Nepean–Carleton, Dufferin–Caledon and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. I'm pleased that other members of our Ontario PC caucus do have the chance to participate, because I know this bill is very, very important in all of their ridings.

As I'll get to during my time today, many of us have work to do this summer, including the minister and the parliamentary assistant, to maintain trail access.

Before I get there, it's appropriate on legislation dealing with trails in Ontario that I begin by talking about the journey that's brought us here today for third reading debate on Bill 100. As we all know, the bill was tabled for first reading more than a year ago. The consultations which the minister and his parliamentary assistant have bragged so much about weren't widespread, and they actually took place in the fall of 2013. That's approaching three years, Speaker.

So it was no surprise that prior to the return to the Legislature this spring, the issue exploded. Property owners who up until now had no idea that Bill 100 even existed began to raise some very serious concerns. Specifically, they worried about the implications of schedule 1, section 12, dealing with easements.

During second reading debate, I spoke at great length about my experience in Leeds–Grenville with property owners who suddenly closed off access to snowmobiles and ATV clubs. For years—years, Speaker—voluntary

handshake agreements based on mutual trust and respect allowed a world-class trail system to be built and maintained. But the intrusion of government into that relationship between trail groups and property owners upset the balance. As a result, some property owners decided to close off access immediately. Others warned that if Bill 100 passed, they too would close off their access.

I worked very hard in my riding to convince property owners not to close those gates, to give me a chance to work with the government on this legislation. I even provided snowmobile clubs with a letter that they could take to property owners who had expressed concerns.

Most on this side of the House know what my original request to the minister was. It was to pull back the bill and to get into rural and northern Ontario to have some direct consultation. Speaker, that didn't happen. The minister ignored my request. I was disappointed that instead, the government's response was accusing me of trying to stoke fears, which is absolute nonsense. My only interest was in maintaining those trails that are vital to the tourism economy in Leeds–Grenville and across the province. I'm not going to put that at risk by playing politics.

What I wanted was better communication with all affected parties. In particular, I wanted property owners, who are often an overlooked group—I recognize that they are really, truly Ontario's trail champions. I wanted those property owners' voices to be heard.

That's the history that led up to Bill 100 at second reading. I opposed it then, but now that it's been through committee, I want to give the minister some credit. It was apparent at second reading and at committee that he listened during second reading debate to what I and many Ontario PC caucus members and the third party and trails groups were saying. He recognized, I think, that the approach this government has taken with so much of its legislative agenda—to stubbornly forge ahead, as if only their voices mattered—would result in disaster. As a result, today we have a better piece of legislation in front of us.

Our amendments to Bill 100, I believe, do address some of the concerns of property owners. First and foremost, there is no longer any question that an easement would be established without the agreement of a property owner. Our amendment added the following to schedule 12:

“Granting of easement voluntary

“(3.1) For greater certainty, the decision to grant an easement under subsection (3) is voluntary.”

Bill 100 is clear. If you're a property owner with a handshake agreement allowing snowmobiles, ATVs or any other trail group to cross your land, the government can't force you and can't force an easement on you.

Now, I have to say this: We—and myself, personally—are extremely disappointed that the government and the minister used its majority at committee to vote down an amendment to remove the transferability of easements between so-called “eligible bodies.” But even

here, it's important to stress, we did manage to give certainty to property owners who might wish to voluntarily establish an easement. We added a new subsection 5.1 to ensure easements can contain one or more covenants agreed to by the property owner and the body to whom the easement is granted. These covenants would clearly state what uses and activities are allowed on the property. To further address the transferability concerns, these covenants remain in place no matter how many times, or to whom, an easement is transferred.

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Finally, Bill 100 now includes our amendment adding subsection 8 to allow for easements to contain one or more covenants addressing the transfer process. Specifically, new subsection 8.1 states that no easement can be assigned by one eligible body to another without the following: (1) the property owner receives reasonable notice; (2) the transfer is made in writing; and (3) the transfer meets any conditions outlined in the covenants contained in the original agreement.

To sum up, our amendments accomplished the following:

- There is language in the bill clearly stating that any easement is voluntary;

- Any easement agreed to would contain covenants that specifically state what can and what can't happen on the property;

- Those covenants remain even if the easement is transferred from one eligible body to another; and

- Easements can only provide covenants regarding future transfers to provide full transparency in the process for property owners and to ensure there are no surprises down the road.

With all of these changes that we were able to get at committee, I'm going to be personally supporting this bill at third reading. It's important to stress that I'm supporting it with the full confidence that we've addressed the concerns of property owners. I say that because, as I mentioned earlier, many of us who represent rural and northern ridings have work to do this summer. We've got work to do this summer to get those closed trails reopened. I'll be meeting with snowmobile clubs and ATV clubs and the property owners they rely on to provide some of the best network of trails in Ontario.

Those trails remain at risk, as the following email I received last month from Bernie Davy, president of the Grenville Snowmobile Association, makes very clear, Speaker:

"As a further update to your office, I wish to confirm that as of today, the Grenville snowmobile club has 11 landowners who have officially closed our trail system on their properties.

"At this point in time, Grenville Snowmobile Association is basically closed down for next fall as far as trails are concerned because of the location of these properties, unless something happens to change or delete Bill 100.

"I realize it is not just the snowmobile clubs that are being hurt by this, but the whole economy is going to take a big hit if this is not corrected."

To Bernie and all the other members who are club presidents in my riding, I want to say that we've been able to change Bill 100 to address some of the concerns of your partner property owners. Over the summer and early fall, I want to stand shoulder to shoulder with these clubs, I want to work with property owners, and I want to try to explain some of the changes and help get those trails open.

To the minister, I say today that your work, your parliamentary assistant's work and your ministry's work is not over after third reading. You have to be prepared to roll up your sleeves and join me and my colleagues in our effort to keep trails open in all of our ridings.

I'll turn it over to the member for Carleton-Mississippi Mills.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Continuing with the lead from the official opposition, I recognize the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Bill 100 is a bad bill, and it should be voted down.

Bill 100 says that an easement for a snowmobile trail could be placed on a farmer's property. An easement is a legal document that gives someone else a legal right to do something on your private property. An easement becomes legal when it is registered on the title to the farm at the land registry office. A farmer does not have the legal authority to remove an easement from his own property. An easement is the removal of a farmer's private property rights.

Farmers and snowmobilers have had a positive working relationship for trails across farmland for more than 40 years. It has been a respectful partnership for both sides; it works. So who thinks we need Bill 100 with its talk of easements and eligible bodies who will control the easements? Farmers didn't ask for easements. Snowmobilers didn't ask for easements. An easement offers no benefit to either party, but the government thinks we need Bill 100. Why?

Section 5 of the bill says, "The minister may recognize a trail as an Ontario trail of distinction."

Section 6 says, "The minister may establish a trail classification system."

Section 8 says, "The minister shall maintain an Ontario trails strategy."

Section 12.1 says that an "eligible body" means the crown; any government agency, board or commission; a First Nation band or community; a municipality; a conservation authority; a board under the Education Act; a registered charity, trustee or donor; any American land conservancy trust under section 170(h) of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States; or any other person or body or nominee.

Section 12.3 says that an easement may be granted to an eligible body.

Section 12.8 says, "An easement may be assigned by an eligible body to another eligible body...."

Section 13 says that this act does not apply to government-owned or -controlled land.

As you can see, just about anybody can be an eligible body. Therefore, just about anybody will have a right to use your private property if you grant the easement.

It is interesting to see that the government does not want this act to apply to their properties, only private property. I also find it interesting that there's no talk of easements in urban areas. I wonder how the residents of Rockcliffe in Ottawa or the Bridle Path in Toronto would react to a bill allowing bicycle paths or walking trails through their front and back yards. There's always the risk that the legislation could be amended to change "may" to "must grant an easement." This was done with the provincial policy statement a few years ago.

Another even more worrisome risk is that the terms "Ontario trail of distinction," "trail classification system" and "Ontario trails strategy" could be incorporated into provincial policy for land use planning and then forced into municipal official land use plans as land use restrictions on private property.

Remember, when it comes to land use planning, the province can do anything. The province can override whatever local governments do. This was done with wetlands. First came the powerless "wetland" designation, which over time was changed to the "provincially significant wetlands" designation, which meant that any kind of work or alteration was prohibited by law. The private landowner lost the use and wealth of his property.

Bill 100 is a threat to private property rights. Some farmers are closing their farms to snowmobile trails to protect their property rights. This is pitting neighbour against neighbour for no reason. Bill 100 must be voted down. Then, farmers and snowmobilers can work together to restore the trust and co-operation that they had before, so that the trails can be open for the enjoyment of Ontarians for decades to come.

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Mr. Speaker, Kurtis Andrews and Terrance Green are two very respected farm lawyers who have provided legal opinions on this bill. Mr. Andrews states:

"The bill does nothing but cause serious problems for landowners.

"It is obvious that the sole purpose of the bill is to take away property rights from property owners.

"To this end, I agree with the position of the" Ontario Landowners Association.

"Bottom line: the 'trail bill' is a terrible piece of proposed legislation with nothing but downside from a property owner's perspective.

"I would certainly never support the bill.

"Kurtis Andrews, farm lawyer, Ottawa."

Mr. Green states:

"If I was representing a farmer, I would tell him to write the president of the snowmobile club and inform them that at the end of this season they are to close the trail over the farm as any and all permissions to cross over the farm are revoked with the delivery of this letter.

"I would also tell the farmer or private property owner not to sign any paper, formal or not, that confirms or gives consent to any use of the private property."

That's Terrance Green, lawyer at Green and Associates Law Offices in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read to you part of a letter from Tom Black, president of the Ontario Landowners Association, regarding his concerns with Bill 100:

"At first glance, most people will think that there is not much to worry about concerning Bill 100, but the Ontario Landowners Association ... has learned the hard way that if you let bad legislation pass, then the only way to fix it is in" the courts, "at great expense to the individual.

"I talked to people from the Ontario Trails Council ... the people who want this bill passed, and they told me that there are about 2,500 trails in Ontario that total about 80,000 kilometres; 20,000 kilometres of those are on private property.

"Only 25% of the trails in Ontario are on private property and therefore only 25% of Ontario's trails are affected by this bill.

"The other 75% of the trails do not fall under the authority of this bill.

"This would lead one to wonder if the objective of this bill is to secure rights to private property rather than to secure the future of trails.

"If the intent of the legislation is to protect and preserve snowmobile trails, shouldn't it apply to all trails?

"Shouldn't it apply to government property as well as private property?

"One thing for sure, most people on the rural roads know that when you mention conservation authorities, private property, and easements in the same act, nothing good will come of it."

That's Tom Black, president, Ontario Landowners Association.

Mr. Speaker, farmers were not asked if they wanted this bill. The bill does nothing for farmers. The bill does nothing for snowmobilers. Farmers and snowmobilers have had a positive working relationship for over 40 years. There is no problem. We don't need a solution to a problem that doesn't exist. This is a bill that does nothing to solve a problem that doesn't even exist. Surely we are not going to stand here in this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and tell the people of Ontario that we are going to vote for nothing to do nothing.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, Bill 100 is much ado about nothing. It is undeserving of support. It must be voted down.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Dufferin-Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 100. It has, as previous speakers have mentioned, caused a little bit of an issue in the spring of 2016. But I want to talk about the process. To me, Bill 100 is all about how the process works. We, as legislators and opposition members, are supposed to listen and react and respond to what the government of the day brings forward. The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport brought forward Bill 100. Full disclosure: I will admit that I was quite

happy with sections of Bill 100, because part of it incorporated a section of one of my private member's bills relating to trespassing on private property, which is a valid and important part of what is here.

But I really want to talk about and acknowledge and thank our critic, the member from Leeds–Grenville. He studied the bill, he reached out to stakeholders who are impacted and he understood what the issues surrounding it were and what people were concerned about. He raised them with the minister. He brought forward those amendments. There were many, many discussions. The member from Leeds–Grenville sits right next to me, and I often saw conversations between the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and our critic. They were trying to work out solutions. I think that what you have in this third reading amendment to Bill 100 is the improvements we were looking for.

To my colleague from Leeds–Grenville: Good on you. Good for being the type of critic we need, raising concerns and bringing forward reasoned amendments that the government was willing to get behind. To the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport: Thank you for actually listening. Thank you for doing your job as a minister, hearing our concerns and making those changes.

We sort of laugh about it here, but I often talk about the value of committee and how it is so frustrating, as an opposition member, when we bring forward amendments and it's just, "No, no, no, no."

To me, Bill 100 is about how this process can work. I just want to say that we can have some improvements as a result of it; we have a better piece of legislation now. I said at second reading that if you changed section 24—I believe it was the famous section 24—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Twelve.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Sorry; 12. Thank you. If you clarify section 12, then I want to support this legislation and I will support this legislation.

I want to say thank you to Leeds–Grenville and thank you to the minister. You've made those amendments. You've clarified it. You've made the language more understandable for everybody who is engaged and involved. Congratulations. I'm happy to support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to join third reading debate on Bill 100. Like many of my colleagues, I was very disappointed when this piece of legislation came out and the government failed in its responsibility to do the pre-legislation consultation that is so important, which could have avoided so many of the problems that Bill 100 brought forth.

We, as individual members, with constituencies like mine in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, have extensive snowmobile clubs running through our ridings. Once people were really aware of what was happening, there was a great deal of concern. What happened was confusion: a poorly delivered message on the part of the government, and a poorly drafted piece of legislation that caused a great deal of consternation—I'll get back to the

good part about it later. The minister doesn't have to leave; he doesn't have to cry. We'll fix it up. But a poorly drafted piece of legislation caused a great deal of consternation and led to the last thing we needed in our ridings with regard to snowmobiling and the absolutely vital effect it has on our local economies and, of course, the economy across the province of Ontario. What it led to, I say to the minister, was the closing of trails.

Now, you can say, "Well, there's nothing in the bill that should have caused that," or, "There's nothing in the bill that deals with the issue of easements that should have led to that." But the reality is that trails were closed, and you had a responsibility, as a government, to deal with that issue. We had a responsibility as members to deal with that issue, and we did. We met with people in our ridings. We met with snowmobile clubs. I met extensively with snowmobile clubs, and I met with many individual landowners who have trails traversing their property.

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I said at the time that I had the undertaking and the commitment from the minister that they were going to fix this piece of legislation. And I said at the time that if the minister is true to his word and fixes this piece of legislation, then I will not only support it in principle; I will vote for it in the House.

I want to give a whole lot of credit to my colleague from Leeds–Grenville, Steve Clark, because he did exactly what was necessary. He took the critic's role extremely seriously, because he saw what could happen if this bill was not fixed. If this bill was not fixed, snowmobiling as we know it in Renfrew county would no longer exist. Snowmobiling in Leeds–Grenville would no longer exist. I'm sure I speak for my colleagues in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and Prince Edward–Hastings—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: And Ottawa.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —and Ottawa–Carleton. I mean, if trails were closed, we would not have the industry. It is vital that those trails open. You've got to have a seamless trail system in order for it work.

So we proposed and received. We did not get everything we wanted. I won't reread the amendments; my colleague did that. We didn't get everything that we wanted, but we got what was substantively necessary for me to be able to comfortably go back to these landowners now, through the summer—because this thing has got to be put to bed before the snow flies. We can go back to our landowners and say to Joe or Bill or Michael or whomever—

Hon. Michael Coteau: Granville.

Mr. John Yakabuski: "Granville, I am absolutely confident that the changes that have been made in this piece of legislation with regard to the establishments of easements, the assignments of easements and the ability to put covenants within those easements give you absolute protection on your property should you open that property to snowmobilers." I am confident that I can do that now that this Bill 100 has been amended.

Tomorrow, when we have a deferred vote on this bill, I will be true to what I said to the people in my riding: that if the government does what they said they're going to do—it's not that often that I stand here happy to be able to say that. Because this is how it should work: The government brings out a piece of legislation, it's not right, but by working with the opposition, they make it right. That's the way this place is supposed to work.

Tomorrow, I will be voting for this piece of legislation. I hope it passes and that the snowmobiles run freely through Renfrew county and all of Ontario this fall and winter, and that our economy continues to benefit from the tremendous sport that snowmobiling is.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Continuing with debate, I recognize the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm really pleased to follow my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and my colleague from Dufferin–Caledon. I think they both speak a lot of common sense, and I think that was what was needed in this piece of legislation.

I do want to commend the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport for taking the time to work with our critic from Leeds–Grenville to improve the legislation. As my colleagues have aptly pointed out, I, for example, voted against this legislation, Bill 100, in the second reading. And I want to tell the minister that his willingness to work with my colleague from Leeds–Grenville has done something I've never done in my 10-year career here at Queen's Park, which is to actually switch my vote from second reading to third reading.

It is critical that the amendments that Mr. Clark from Leeds–Grenville brought forward at committee passed. We didn't, as my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke states, get everything we wanted, but we did ensure that all easements are voluntary, that we knew that when an easement is transferred the use of the property cannot change, and that all easements must address property transfers.

As my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke pointed out, as did my colleague from Leeds–Grenville, the big concern for many of us was that the snowmobile trails would have been closed. This caused a great deal of confusion, particularly in rural Ottawa, where people were not aware of what this bill meant and how it was going to impact either the landowner or the snowmobilers.

From my perspective, I think that the common-sense approach that was taken in order to perfect this piece of legislation, or at least make it better, is the reason that, for the first time in my career, I'm able to say that a bad bill was made better because a critic did their job in ensuring that the concerns of the public were well represented. Now, that doesn't happen all the time. We know for a fact that it doesn't happen all of the time. We look at, for example, the Ontario pension plan or we look at the old HST bill that was rammed through this assembly in 2010. You look at a wide variety of legislation, even the Green Energy Act, which doesn't

seem make a lot of sense to Ontario families, but what has happened in this case—and you have to give credit to the minister and to the official opposition critic for doing what we're supposed to do here, which is working to make something better. It would be impossible for me to vote against a piece of legislation when everything we asked for, with the exception of maybe one or two small amendments, was passed.

So I ask members who may have voted against this bill, as I did in the second reading: How do you not take yes for an answer? We asked the government for changes. It's very rare that they make accommodations for us, and in this particular case, they did. How do we not take yes for an answer? I think the responsible thing to do is to actually support this legislation, to make sure that the trails are open come next winter. I think the real issue we would have had is that those trails would have been closed. When I think of the conversations I've had, for example, with the former president of the Ottawa–Carleton snowmobilers' club, George Darouze, who's now a city councillor in Ottawa, it was all around the confusion that we were left in because we weren't aware of the government actually wanting to come forward and to listen.

With that, Speaker, I am going to follow the lead of my critic, Mr. Clark, and many of the speakers before me from the Progressive Conservative caucus. I will be supporting this piece of legislation, but I think it's really important to underscore the tremendous leadership role and work that went into the series of amendments to improve the bill by Steve Clark from Leeds–Grenville.

Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to debate this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Continuing along, I recognize the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to speak to this bill. My riding is big, big, big from a tourism perspective and the economy, and from day one, I looked at this bill and said that we have to ensure we have a network of trails systems in our province for the viability of not only my great area of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound but all tourism.

I also want to acknowledge my colleague Steve Clark from Leeds–Grenville, our critic, who has taken this very seriously and taken those amendments.

When I stood at second reading, even though I voted for it then—and I took a lot of heat in my riding from people who said that I should never help this government or support this government. I felt it was a piece of legislation that, with some work—and I spoke very directly to the minister and asked that minister to ensure that those concerns, particularly of the property owners, were addressed, and I want to acknowledge again that he has. We have found some of those amendments.

Mr. Speaker, tourism represents 4% of our GDP in the province of Ontario, supports 350,000 jobs and represents about \$1.4 billion in economic benefits. We need to ensure that we keep that trail system alive for that fact, very specifically.

As we went through the debate, what we found were some amendments. We wanted a new subsection, subsection (5.1), to guarantee that easements can contain one or more covenants, agreed to by the property owner and the body to whom the easement is granted. At least one of the speakers today has left out the word that it's voluntary. That's the biggest thing that I want to reinforce here and I've said it to the people in my riding: It is voluntary on behalf of the landowner, the property owner. It's not moving forward by anybody. No one is coming in and saying that you have to do this, unless they agree. That, we have been able to get some certainty around.

These covenants can state what uses and activities are allowed on the property. To further address the transferability concerns, these covenants stay in place no matter how many times or to whom an easement is transferred. And, finally, Bill 100 now includes our amendment adding subsection (8) to allow for easements to contain one or more covenants addressing the transfer process.

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Specifically, new subsection 8.1 states that no easement can be assigned by one eligible body to another without the following:

- (1) The property owner receives reasonable notice.
- (2) The transfer is made in writing.
- (3) The transfer meets any conditions outlined in the covenants contained in the original agreement.

We talked very specifically about those. That was the feedback I received from the people in my riding, and we brought those forward. Again, I'm proud to say that we got most of those amendments that we asked for, and it's a bill that I believe I'll certainly be supporting.

We also found, in a lot of the deputations—for example, the Bruce Trail, which is, obviously, a huge, huge economic potential and asset for this province. They came out and told us that they were challenged before without easements, because they couldn't get access to property. It's very technical. They had to own the piece next door to be able to even look at that piece of property. This allows them to maintain and actually get more.

They are 895 kilometres long, about 60% in public ownership and 40% private land. They have 950 agreements with landowners to allow the Bruce Trail across their land, and yet only 22 easements, because it was so technical, because it took so much time to get that done.

At the end of the day, this is something that they have supported. They wanted this to happen and believe it will help to enhance the perpetuity and sustainability of the Bruce Trail.

The snowmobile clubs: The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs certainly supports it, and my local snowmobile clubs. Sadly, because of a lot of misinformation—and a number of my colleagues have alluded to the way this bill was brought out at first—there was a lot of uncertainty out there, and landowners started to shut

down their trails. That's not good for any of us in Ontario, if we lose our trails system. So we were very specific, saying that it has to maintain the voluntary; it has to be specific and clear. It has provided certainty with the way the easements are going to be introduced. I think we've been able to accomplish something that is going to work for everyone in the long term. It's going to benefit people.

Trespassing fines: I'm again going to pay credit to my colleague from Dufferin—Caledon. The trespassing fines went from \$2,000 to \$10,000. The property owners there—we've been able to try to give them some compensation for those rogue people that actually do create damage out on our trails. The award for damages by trespassers: There used to be a \$1,000 limit, and that has been taken out of the bill, which I believe, again, is a good enhancement for those people, those landowners.

This is a very important bill to my riding. We're big on tourism. We have a lot of people. We have the Bruce Trail, snowmobile clubs, ATV trails, biking trails, and walking trails. From day one, I have said that this is a bill we have to support, because I believe it is a good piece of legislation. Most of my colleagues—Randy Hillier, who used to be part of the landowners, said it's a good piece of legislation, and he looks through legislation fairly clearly and fairly closely. At the end of the day, I'm pleased that we've been able to get those amendments.

My colleague Steve Clark from Leeds—Grenville has done a tremendous amount of work—and there is a lot of work. A number of my colleagues in here have spoken, again, to how this isn't over just once we do the vote tomorrow. We have to work with a lot of those clubs, particularly those ones that made a very quick snap decision to say, "I'm shutting off my property." If we don't have access to those trails, we don't have snowmobile clubs. If we don't have snowmobile clubs, we don't have that economic driver that we so greatly benefit from and need, to ensure those jobs and the ripple effect to our economies.

I'm pleased to say that I think the system has worked. We've taken it to second reading. We've gotten some amendments. We're back now. Tomorrow, we'll vote on this. I am certainly going to be supporting this for the benefit of Ontario as a whole, that those clubs will have access to the trails, and the users will have it. It's good for the economy; it's good for our health; it's good for the environment. I'm pleased to say I'll be supporting this bill tomorrow.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Further debate? I recognize the member—

Mr. Paul Miller: Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and speak about the Supporting Ontario's Trails Act.

The main problem with Bill 100 is that the consultation and communication has not been as extensive as it needed to be.

In addition to that, section 12 of schedule 1, dealing with easements, has stirred up quite the controversy. It needed amendments, additions and deletions. Some of those have happened, I'm pleased to say, but others have not.

There are 2,500 trails in Ontario, stretching over 80,000 kilometres. Trails are not just for recreational use. In northern Ontario, people often rely on their trails in the absence of passable roads or highways. We cannot neglect that, and this is one of the reasons why this bill is so important to the north.

The NDP supports the objectives of this bill because we want to see trails improved, maintained and expanded. But the misinformation that has been spread about this bill has created some fear. It has had some very negative knock-on effects for northern Ontario that need to be arrested now, but only the government has the ability to do so. We need the ministry to reach out to the public, explain what the bill is really about and talk to the people impacted, one to one, about their concerns, because trust in government is probably at its all-time low, I'm sorry to say. If people start hearing that the government is going to take their land, they get anxious; they get scared. Well, Speaker, who wouldn't?

The government is not taking anyone's land with this bill; there's an option in here for a landowner to grant easements. Whether an easement is perpetual or term-limited is the decision of landowner. So too is the decision over whether or not to grant an easement at all in the first place. No landowner has to give away any land. No landowner has to have their land forcibly taken from them. This bill is meant to reconcile the interests of landowners and trail users. It does that by providing a greater, stronger protective framework for both landowners and trail users, but that framework is of no use if people do not understand it.

As the member from Leeds–Grenville said in earlier debate, the agreements reached between trail users and landowners are very delicate. The interpretations of these agreements are very delicate. Anything that endangers this delicate balance and these delicate agreements is a threat to northern communities. All it takes is one anxious landowner to close a part of the trail to break the whole system. Depending on the location, the trail could be permanently severed in two. Most likely, if one landowner is worried, there will be others too, and they're watching very closely. So pretty soon you'll have other landowners saying, "Hey, why am I leaving myself vulnerable when my neighbours are taking steps to protect themselves?" Then, we're cutting the trail in multiple locations. We may not have usable trails anymore. It might be too fragmented, especially if it goes through difficult terrain that is not accessible by good roads.

We need to understand there is a pre-existing ecosystem here. The government needs to understand that as well. The intention of the bill is to allow for solid legal supports to be put in place with the ecosystem where it could be beneficial to both landowners and trail users. These would only be reached through more individually

negotiated agreements, but this is not the perception out there. Whatever we can say about good intentions, there has been a failure of communication around this bill. People need to have confidence that the bill will be a benefit to both the landowners and the trail users.

Yes, this bill will affect urban trails, which are of enormous recreational benefit to the people of Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Peterborough and all over the other cities in this province, but the overwhelming impact of the bill will be in rural or northern Ontario. Let us not pretend otherwise: That's where it's really going to be effective. In second reading debate, we asked the government to take the committee hearings and the consultations there. In the committee meetings to organize the hearings for this bill, I moved a motion to hold two days of committee hearings in northern Ontario in order to make these hearings accessible to the people most affected by this legislation because we understood that farmers and snowmobilers, who are often the same people, weren't going to travel in great numbers here to Queen's Park from Timiskaming–Cochrane, James Bay, Kenora–Rainy River and eastern Ontario.

It was completely out of touch and insulting to rural and northern Ontarians to say that they needed to take time out of their lives and spend hundreds, sometimes thousands, of dollars to come all the way to Toronto in order to make their voices heard.

This is one Ontario, and we need to make sure that all Ontarians' voices are heard equally. If we have a bill sitting here that primarily affects rural and northern Ontario, then that's where the hearings need to be.

The committee members of the PC Party supported my motion. To our great disappointment, but sadly not to our great surprise, the members of the government party voted against it. They seemed to genuinely believe that they had done a marvellous job with their consultation process. Well, listening to a lot of witnesses in front of the committee, we may have disabused some of them of that notion.

Time and time again, we heard testimony that consultations had not been adequate. Some groups had never even been contacted. Over and over again, we heard that the failure of communication around this bill had created terrible knock-on effects for the trail system in rural and northern Ontario.

What they've been doing hasn't worked. The failure to reach out to communities directly affected is not good enough at this point. Holding two days of hearings in Toronto and not allowing adequate time either to register as a witness or to prepare or send a written submission wasn't very good either.

My colleagues and I have been speaking very forcibly about the facts and myths of this bill, but it's the government's job to promote their legislation, to ensure that the public has a proper understanding of their legislation, and to make sure that the bill has a positive impact on the trail system in our province. If it doesn't, if it continues to result in the closure of trails, whatever the text of the legislation says, Bill 100 will have been a total disaster, setting back Ontario's trail system for decades.

1720

I had hoped that the government would have accepted our amendments of the bill. We proposed clear, plain-English additions to the legislation that would have reassured any reader, be they a landowner or a trail user, that the false stories circulating about the bill held no water. Early on, we had been under the impression that the government was receptive to our modest proposals, but they steadily drew back, and when it came to the crunch, the Liberals on the committee didn't support any of our new amendments.

These were pretty good policy ideas, Speaker, that had no negative impact on the bill whatsoever and would have helped diffuse some of the tensions surrounding the legislation. I'm sorry to say that, as is often the case, good amendments weren't accepted in committee for political rather than policy reasons, and that's pretty sad.

One of our amendments stated that, "For greater certainty, an agreement between the owner of the land and an eligible body that gives the organization the right to use or access all or a portion of the land on a seasonal basis does not constitute an easement for the purposes of this section unless the agreement so specifies." It was very clear, Speaker—very specific. Any landowner reading this would have been reassured that had none of their existing or future handshake agreements would ever, ever be converted into an easement on their property. I don't understand why the government didn't accept this. The legislation obviously doesn't intend to do such a thing, so why not allow a plain-English addition to make it crystal clear to everyone reading, especially when this has been one of the biggest myths circulating around Bill 100?

Another one of our amendments stated, "For greater certainty, nothing in this section shall be interpreted so as to give an eligible body the right or power to reserve or create an easement on an owner's land except in accordance with subsection (3) or (4)." The government's excuse for not supporting this amendment was that it would restrict the ability of one eligible body to assign an easement to another eligible body. That is very obviously not the case.

Even though we were not in favour of the subsection on assignments for transfers, the amendment said nothing about transferring an existing easement. It spoke only about creating a new one. All this amendment did was to clarify that no eligible body would have the power to impose an easement on private land. Again, it was reassuring that the existing system of the agreement would not be part of a slippery slope into some sort of automatic easement or claim or easement. It is very disappointing, Speaker, that the government members were unwilling to support a common sense amendment such as this.

Now, I don't want to be all negative. To their credit, the government did accept one clarifying amendment that had been proposed by all three parties. The bill has thus been amended to state that the decision to grant an easement under subsection (3) is voluntary. I'm pleased that the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport listened to the opposition parties and the committee witnesses in

this case and accepted that, a positive amendment. The minister has already been quoted as saying that, "An easement pursuant to Bill 100, if passed, would be a voluntary agreement between a landowner and an eligible body or bodies. No property owner would be compelled to provide an easement unless they agreed to do so." This amendment incorporated that ministerial statement into the legislation.

With all that happening, the only way to reassure landowners of the truth of this statement was to insert clear language to that effect directly in the bill. In this case, it did that. I only wish it had done the same for our other two amendments that had similar purposes.

As my colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane has said, words like "easement" and "covenant" are trigger words for lawyers. So as well as more clarity in the language, we need better communication and outreach so that people can see for themselves and be reassured that existing arrangements are not affected, that the cloud of lawyers and the possibility of losing power over your land are blown away. As for the options around easements, those need to be written and communicated very clearly as well, so that everyone is clear about their rights. Something that many of the members and their constituents have found problematic is the ability of an eligible body to assign an easement to another eligible body.

There simply aren't enough conditions on this. This is the kind of provision that will have landowners dead set against the legislation. We supported the PC amendment to remove schedule 1, section 12, subsection (8) entirely, as we heard both at committee and back in our ridings that it was causing far too much grief for any possible benefit it provided. Unfortunately the government was not willing to back down on this one.

Just as a point of information, Speaker, I'll be sharing my time with the members from Timiskaming-Cochrane and Algoma-Manitoulin.

As a result of that, we are not satisfied with the legislation in front of us. Some amendments have been made to ease some of the concerns about this, but it does not remove the problem entirely. What we were looking for was an assurance in the legislation that if any assignment or transfer did occur, it would be conditional on the consent of the property owner. I appreciate that the minister's office did reach out to us on this, but we weren't able to cross the divide. This wasn't something our constituents wanted us to compromise on, so we couldn't.

I'd like to repeat how deeply disappointed we are that the government refused to take the committee hearings for this bill on the road to northern Ontario. We proposed two days of hearings in the north, perhaps in places like Sudbury or Sault Ste. Marie, but the Liberal members turned it down.

In second reading debate, the member for Kingston and the Islands informed the House that 11 ministries participated in the process of developing this legislation. It is good to see collaboration across government lines

and between ministries. I don't want to downplay the importance of that for developing good public policy, but it's far from sufficient, and it is of absolutely no reassurance to the people in rural and northern Ontario. What happens at Queen's Park in committees and through ministries really doesn't get to them. They want it in plain, straight English so there can be no technicalities, there can be no games played and they feel comfortable with it.

We on the opposition side of the House had hoped the government would make this process more accessible to the people it really impacts. I had hoped, at the very least, if not out of respect for the people of rural and northern Ontario and if not out of genuine desire for good public policy, that the government might be persuaded to engage more deeply with these communities out of pure political self-interest. Because nothing is going to alienate them further from this government faster than the perception that they are ramming through a bill for rural Ontario designed in Toronto and discussed in Toronto, in this building, and that the only consultations they hold are in Toronto, in this building, and with some of the people in Toronto. It certainly doesn't give the north a warm feeling about their involvement that they don't have the decency or the respect to go and have an open, two-way conversation with the people in communities most directly affected by this legislation, in the north.

That infuriates people. It alienates them and causes great resentment for southern Ontario and this building. That mood is growing in the province, unfortunately. We have to change that. We have to make the people in northern Ontario feel part of the process, part of our great province and all the good things that they bring to the table.

But it's not just geographic. The government is going out of its way to alienate so many demographics and segments of the population across this province, and that includes a lot of people even in Toronto. Imagine making enemies out of the parents of autistic children. It beggars belief that a government in a hole would keep on digging, but there they are, about to break through the earth's crust with some of these policies. The culture of scandal and waste surrounding the government has created deep distrust among the people of Ontario, and rightfully so.

Now they are hearing about a bill that might take away their rights over their own land, and they are willing to believe it, or at least consider the possibility, because the government's track record doesn't give them any confidence in its good faith or good intentions. I guess what they're saying is that they have been burned before and they don't want to be burned again.

It's not just geographic. The government is going out of its way to alienate some demographics and segments across the province. That includes a lot of people in Toronto, as I've said.

Remember, the farmers and landowners don't gain personally from allowing access to these trails. So when they hear bad stories about this bill, they rightly get

nervous, because they have a lot to lose if they are true, a lot more than they have to gain if they are false. It's going to require very honest, good-faith outreach from this government to reassure private landowners they have nothing to fear from this bill.

This is a well-intentioned bill, Speaker, I must admit, and we supported it at second reading in the hope that the government would be willing to accept constructive amendments and that the government would be willing to take the committee hearings and consultations on the road to communities impacted by this legislation. Well, we got a quarter of the way there, and that's profoundly disappointing, to say the least.

I will give some credit to the minister. He both proposed and accepted some constructive amendments that have improved the legislation. There are many ministers in the government who will not listen and will not amend bills, which is not good, but, as my colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane said, you've got the government with lawyers, and the eligible bodies and the future eligible bodies will all have lawyers, but what about the landowners? If they get into a process where they need a lawyer, they're not going to bother. They're going to say, "Sorry, you're not going across my land," because why would they punish themselves through that and put themselves through all that aggravation of cost and lawyers?

1730

This legislation needs to be clear that a lawyer doesn't need to be involved at all—no lawyers, no courts, no judges. Once there's legal uncertainty, the deal would be off—game over for the trails. I urge the government to listen to what you've been hearing repeatedly and consistently from members on this side of the House.

When this bill receives royal assent, you'll have to take it on the road again. You'll have to take it to places that actually have these trails and depend on these trails. It needs to be done properly for the people of rural Ontario, especially for the parts of the province that depend on these trails for snowmobiling, not just for their own access, but for the snowmobile industry and all the tourist dollars that follow in certain parts of this province. Local economies depend on it, and it takes a few landowners to say no and the whole system of trails collapses in our province. That would be terrible. It would be a real blow for these communities and such an unnecessary one.

It can easily be avoided if this government takes out their road show and talks with people who actually use these trails and own the land that these trails go on, not their Toronto spokesperson or their Toronto stakeholders; go directly to the people themselves. I urge the government to not just go and talk, but to listen to what they say. This could be a very beneficial bill for Ontario trails and for rural Ontario, and it would be a terrible shame if poor communication and the unwillingness to engage turned this good bill into a disaster for the trail system. Don't let it happen.

We all want the Ontario trail system to expand and flourish. We all want to act in a way that benefits the

people of rural Ontario and northern Ontario. But if the government doesn't communicate, if it doesn't take the bus around the province, then I truly fear that, one by one, farmers and landowners across Ontario are going to lose their faith and maybe close off some of the trails. They're going to cancel long-standing agreements and understandings that used to be made with a handshake. The threads that run across our province and within our communities could be broken. The trails across Ontario will start shutting down. They will destroy accessibility. They will ruin livelihoods. They will damage the fabric of many communities. And this government will wear it. If it falls apart, they'll wear it.

It doesn't have to be that way, Speaker. I know that the minister knows this. This legislation can still be a success story for the Ontario trail system. I hope the government comes to an understanding of that. I hope the government will listen to the people of northern Ontario and the rest of Ontario: eastern Ontario, western Ontario and southern Ontario.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Continuing with debate, I recognize the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: Just to start off, I will be sharing my time with the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

Once again, it's an opportunity and an honour to be able to rise in this House, and specifically to speak about Bill 100, the trails act. At the start, I had an opportunity to speak on second reading, and I'd like to repeat part of it again, just for clarity. I'm a proud snowmobiler and I'm a member of the Tri-Town Sno Travellers. I'm also a property owner. Another snowmobile club, Club Echo from Earlton, has had the right to use my property for the last 30 years, I believe. I am confident that that will continue.

In my first 20 minutes on this bill, I concentrated on the snowmobile part of this that affects snowmobilers. I'm going to do that again in third reading. It's very important to my riding, and not just to my riding but to northern Ontario, and not just northern Ontario but to the province as a whole, because the snowmobile trail system is not only a great source of enjoyment for many people, but it's also a very big economic driver.

When I spoke the first time in second reading on this bill—and just for anyone who's interested, first reading is kind of a formality. In second reading, those of our members who want to speak to it speak to it, unless the government decides to time-allocate. But most times, people get to speak to it. Then it goes to committee where the public gets to speak to it. Then it goes through an amendment process, and some amendments are accepted and some are rejected. Then it comes back for third reading and passage.

In my first kick at the can, I identified three issues with this bill. The other speakers here have done a pretty good job of saying that the big issue is that if property owners lose faith, they will take away the right to use their property.

One of the issues that property owners have with this bill is, there is a section in this bill that allows an

easement to be granted to a club. There's a reason for that, and I gave an example: If a club wants to put a bridge onto an obstacle, if they need to put a bridge over that obstacle, and it's on private land, right now it's with a handshake. This bridge could cost \$200,000, and a year from now the property owner could say, "No, you are no longer allowed through my land," so the investment in that bridge could be gone. That's why a club would want an easement. If that was the case on my property, I think it would be a valid proposition to put an easement. Many property owners were concerned, as were we, that the easement—it had to be very plain in this bill, because the intent of the bill hasn't changed on that issue. But the language has, due to our work, and the official opposition, and the government working with us, the minister working with us, and his staff. It's much clearer in the bill now that an easement is a voluntary process initiated by the property owner. If the property owner does not want to grant an easement, it won't be granted. That's a crucial change in this bill. I'm not going to go through which amendment is which.

For property owners like me in my part of the world and across the province, the easement process is a voluntary process. I am going to continue to grant Club Echo the use of my property. I am not going to grant them an easement. I am going to grant them the right to use my property on a seasonal basis. That is not an easement, and that will still give me, and my fellow property owners, the ultimate control of that property. That's an improvement.

Another issue that we put forward, and that I put forward in my first kick at the can at second reading, was that the main issues in this bill were with people in rural Ontario, specifically northern Ontario, and that this bill should be at least travelled to northern Ontario so that property owners from throughout the province could participate in the process. That wasn't done. The hearings were held here. I'm not one who tends to overblow things, but that, quite frankly, was a slap in the face to property owners. It was clearly identified. On our side, the third party, the NDP—we weren't asking for months of hearings, to delay this, because this is very important to us. We do not want the trail system to fail. But the government thought otherwise, so the hearings were only in Toronto.

I attended part of the hearings, and I would like to put on the record that the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs made a very good presentation and they understood what the issue is. The issue isn't about stakeholder groups, as the federation of snowmobile clubs is, as the Ontario Trails Council is, even as the landowners are. The issue is with individual property owners. That's the issue. Those are the people who haven't really been consulted, and those people are actually the people who allow the use, as I do—I allow the use of my land for no financial benefit at all. Actually, it's a financial loss, because on farmland, when there's a snowmobile trail, the yield is much less. We do it for the good of the community. So the fact that we weren't—and I say "we"

as a collective “we,” because I think I was fairly well consulted because I’m the MPP, but my fellow property owners don’t feel that well consulted.

The third issue that hasn’t been addressed in this bill—and I’ve listened this afternoon, and I don’t think it has been addressed very well. The third issue in this bill is for those property owners who, out of the good of their heart, do grant an easement.

1740

Within this bill, if you grant an easement to one group, unless you make sure that it’s stipulated by—and you know what: For this bill, if you grant an easement, before you do that, you’d better consult a lawyer. This bill does not protect property owners who grant an easement, because the default position in this bill is if—and I’ll use, as my example, a bridge. If I grant an easement for the bridge to a federation, clubs or any club, and I don’t specifically put in, in a covenant, that this easement is not to be transferred, then it’s fully transferable. So the default position of this bill is to allow the transfer of easements to other groups.

Quite frankly, I find that abhorrent because the property owner who actually grants the easement is not protected unless he or she gets a very good lawyer. I brought up in the second reading that this was a no-go for me. It still is. I’m going to support this bill because I think there are some good changes to be made, but I want to make it very clear for those people who were going to grant an easement that the default position is not in favour of the property owner. That is a huge, huge problem.

People say, “Oh, no, it’s easy to understand.” I’ll read an amendment. We put forward an amendment: “For greater certainty, nothing in this section shall be interpreted so as to give an eligible body the right or power to reserve or create an easement on an owner’s land except in accordance with subsection (3) or (4).”

What that amendment was for is to clarify in people’s minds that—just like I do, I grant a yearly use permit—even if I do that for 20 years, it slowly doesn’t morph into some kind of easement. That’s what we put that in for. The Liberal members voted against it, and their argument was that the amendment would restrict the ability of one eligible body to assign an easement to another eligible body. Even the Liberal members in that committee did not understand this bill.

So I beg people to understand: If you are going to enter into an easement with any club—and there are cases where it’s a perfectly legitimate thing to do—it’s going to cost you the money for a lawyer. It had better be a good one because you have the ability now to put covenants in, which is a good thing, but they’re not going to go in by themselves. At minimum, it should be put in that, if you decide to grant an easement as a property owner, the easement should not be transferable, and it should be very clear who can go on that trail with the easement and for how long. I’m sure there are other ones. But if you just grant an open-ended easement because—in my case, with the Federation of Snowmobile Clubs,

my local club, I have a very good relationship with the club. In my personal case, I wouldn’t have a problem working together with my snowmobile club. If they need an easement on one of my properties, I wouldn’t have a problem, but I know that you need to get your own legal opinion to be protected because in 10 years you might not be dealing with the same people, and whoever you deal with might not be the same. You might not be as happy. That’s very, very important.

That’s a real problem with this bill: The default position with the easement is for the trail organization. It’s not for the property owner. That, in my opinion, is inexcusable. That’s why I’m really focusing on this issue.

Yes, I support this act. I fully support the snowmobile system, and there are a lot of improvements for the snowmobile system, but the fact that if you are one of those people who actually goes out of your way to grant an easement, you could be punished in the future by doing so if you don’t take the proper legal precautions—because, like I said in second reading, the government has lots of lawyers and the trail organizations have lots of lawyers. Somehow the government’s lawyers missed this or didn’t understand it. The government has lots of legal representation advising the members on the committees, and obviously the member in this committee did not understand what was being proposed, because her debate made no sense at all. That’s a problem. Again, the act is much clearer on whether an easement is voluntary or not. It’s voluntary. That’s a good thing.

They didn’t have hearings in the places where it really mattered, with the people who really mattered. That’s a problem, because there are still people out there who have never been consulted, who have never really heard about what this is. They’re going to read an article in the paper and they very well could no longer allow the use of their property based on a rumour. That’s tragic, because the trail system is very important. That could be because the government never bothered to actually go to places where trails are a lifeline, a lifeblood.

Like I said, OFSC came here and they did a great job. There were a couple of others—and I’m not going to name them. But I was sitting at those hearings, and you know what? The OFSC did a great job. I was happy that I was an OFSC member, and I was fairly confident because I allowed them the use of my land. But the next person who came to testify, I thought, “Boy, if he comes on my farm, I’m closing the trail the next day or the same day.” But the way this act is set up now, if the trail group transfers their easement, I could very well get the other guy. That is a huge risk.

If I can leave the people of my area—overall, Bill 100 is good. It lessens your liability. It doesn’t take away the power of your land, but it has a huge caveat, and that is, if you decide to grant any type of easement, be very, very careful; be very, very afraid. And if you’re going to be very afraid, you know what you do? You protect yourself. If it makes sense, if the easement makes sense—because you know there will be people who will want to do this, and I can think of examples in my riding where it

makes perfect sense—be very, very careful. Make sure you are protected. Usually a bill, a law, in my opinion, a balanced law—everyone should be equally protected. With this, with the section that allows you to grant an easement, once you decide to grant an easement, the default position goes to the trail organization; it doesn't go to you. You are not equally protected. You will have to make sure that you pay for a lawyer—and it had better be a good one—and that he or she makes sure that there are covenants in that easement that protect the property owner, because they are not in there as part of the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Bring us home, Mantha. Bring us home.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I will. I'm going to invite you all to my home in Algoma-Manitoulin, because I think what was significantly done in committee and also through our discussions, the amendments that were done—it's going to take a lot of work with the Ski-Doo clubs, with the trail activists over the course of the summer, but I think we've done enough in order to satisfy them, along with the landowners on Manitoulin Island, across the North Shore and in the northern part of my riding, that we'll be able to see some good activities going on over the course of the winter.

There's a few things I wanted to touch on. We're getting late in the hour of the day, Mr. Speaker, so I'll be brief in my comments.

The member from Timiskaming-Cochrane really articulated and presented the concerns for the individuals who are going to be thinking of putting in an easement—I'll touch on that a little bit later. But the major concerns that were coming from my area—and first, I want to go back to the debate that was shut down on this particular bill and the fact that we didn't consult with many of the affected areas within this province. The simple ask—that we wanted to go out to where the individuals were that were really going to be affected by the amendments in this bill, throughout northern Ontario—was not something that was accepted by the Liberal government. However, we did have an opportunity to hear from the trail enthusiasts at committee, and I was very much involved with those discussions at the committee stage.

1750

The major concerns that were coming out from my area—one was the interpretation, under section 4 or 5, that the minister may recognize a trail as an Ontario trail of distinction or the minister may establish a trail classification system. Some of the individuals were confused as to what that exactly meant. Does that give special designation to the minister to assign the trail, or to go over and disregard a landowner's choice of granting that trail on his property, if it had been there historically and now he wanted to change his mind? Through the discussions that we had in committee, it basically means that if a landowner, along with a Ski-Doo club and maybe a municipality, has identified a trail—and let's call it the Blue Bayou Trail or the Blueberry Patch

Trail—and they want to identify that in order to promote it, in order to have an enhanced economic opportunity to attract people to their communities, they will do so. That's what that means. So that was one of the concerns that was there from many of the people across my area.

The other thing that people are very encouraged about when they're looking at this bill is that we're actually going to develop a trails strategy now. There's going to be more of a focus on the importance of Ski-Doo clubs and there's going to be more importance on the trails that are within our areas, and the minister will have to report back to this House.

So there are good things in this bill, as we go through it, that were encouraging to individuals across this province—that they were now going to be part of the greater discussion. That's also key: being part of that greater discussion. You have to reach out to those areas across this province. You have to have an engagement process.

When there was a lot of confusion that came out of this bill, and when the minister basically stood up and said, "Wait a second; just trust us. We'll get this done. We'll get this right"—I'm sorry, but the history is there. Your track record has not been very good with Ontarians over the course of the last few years as far as trusting you in regard to what you're going to be doing and how these amendments are going to change and how in this piece of legislation we're going to change the historical significance and the agreements that have been there between landowners and particularly the trail enthusiasts. The OFSC made an excellent presentation.

The other concern that was cleared was—this is going to continue being a voluntary process. The landowner who had the voluntary agreement with the Ski-Doo enthusiasts—you had that handshake. It's a volunteer process. It has always been there. It has always worked. People wanted to make sure that it is going to be there. I can say, by participating at the committee stage, that those agreements are going to be there going forward. That is the second-biggest concern that I had from constituents across my riding.

The other thing concerned the discussions particularly around schedule 12 and the concerns that are there when it comes to the easement. There were definitely some huge uncertainties that were there, and I'm going to be working very diligently along with the Ski-Doo clubs over the course of the summer to clarify that to individuals. My recommendation that I'm going to be making to landowners is, don't get into an easement. Stay away from them. Continue with the practice that you had, with a handshake and a voluntary agreement. If you open up that Pandora's box, you'd better make darn sure that you have every restriction, a clear understanding of who is going to be using that trail for what period of time, for what groups, for what duration, how long, and just making sure that it's crystal clear. Get your legal department, get your legal representatives to help you make sure that you know exactly what will happen if you are going to grant that easement.

It is important that we have those easements in certain areas. You have to understand that. We're going to be putting a lot of money on these trails, and the amount of Ski-Doo's that are going to be using these areas—some of these grids are quite costly, so we're going to be doing that.

Applause.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'm not done. They shut down the damn debate when I stood up in this House, when I wanted to speak. They can stay here a couple of more minutes and listen to me, for crying out loud, because these are the voices and these are the views from the individuals across Algoma-Manitoulin. I was quite prepared that morning with a darn good speech. I had a 20-minute speech to deliver, and they shut down the debate on me.

I've articulated the points and concerns from the constituents that I have across Algoma-Manitoulin. I look forward to engaging with them. I am going to be supporting this act because the principle that the agreements are going to be voluntary is going to go forward, and I'm looking to present that and having those discussions with my constituents in my riding.

I'm done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? Further debate?

Mr. Coteau has moved third reading of Bill 100, An Act to enact the Ontario Trails Act, 2015 and to amend various Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

I have received a deferral slip to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly: "Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on third reading of Bill 100 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, June 1, 2016."

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Seeing as it is now close to 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

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Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 41^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 1 June 2016

Mercredi 1^{er} juin 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 1 June 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 1^{er} juin 2016

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WASTE-FREE ONTARIO ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO SANS DÉCHETS

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 31, 2016, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016 and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur la récupération des ressources et l'économie circulaire et la Loi transitoire de 2016 sur le réacheminement des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm proud to rise today, on behalf of my constituents in Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, to speak to Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act. It's an interesting title, because I know there's no such thing as waste-free; I know it's a target that governments and municipalities have been pushing for.

To look after waste is something that's been very expensive. There have been lots of ideas. I know that lots of the better ideas have been stifled by this government over the years as we look through.

As the mayor of South Glengarry, landfill costs were huge, in my day, in some ways rivalling what we spent on roads and bridges. Sometimes we looked at it and really costed it. We didn't feel that the millions we spent on approvals—we questioned the merit or the benefit of it.

We've had the government listen to some of the delegations that came forth and listen to the opposition parties themselves, and I think we had some changes that came through that we were quite happy with, through the readings—third reading.

The new authority must report on its progress in winding down expensive, inefficient agencies such as Ontario Tire Stewardship, Ontario Electronic Stewardship and Stewardship Ontario—lots of stewards there. It just talks about the many agencies there and the trouble that busi-

nesses, which are trying to function, profit and provide jobs in this province, are having.

We saw reports of lavish and wasteful spending by Ontario Tire Stewardship executives on the backs of Ontarians who had no choice but to pay. Ontario Tire Stewardship decided to increase the tax on farm tires by 20 times, creating a massive issue for our agricultural sector.

I know that on the surface it looks like, "Well, farmers will just pay more. They'll eat the cost," but my riding borders on the US and also borders on Quebec. Actually, I grew up in an area that's a mile from the border, and for most of my time before I went off to university, our address was actually Dalhousie Station, Quebec. That's where the post office was, and it caused all kinds of problems as things got a lot more official with health cards, as you can imagine, if you went in and your address was in Quebec. It forced the government of the day to separate post offices based on provincial lines.

I got a call from a tire distributor, Glengarry Tire, in Glen Robertson, just a couple of miles outside my riding, in the Glengarry–Prescott–Russell riding. He said, "What am I going to do? I'm selling to people like my brothers, who go out and buy tires. You're putting a tax on my tires"—it was \$800. "Anybody who wants to avoid the tax drives five miles down to the dealership in Dalhousie, Quebec, and they don't pay it." He said, "I may as well just shut down and move." Those are the issues we're looking at.

When you bring in uncompetitive taxes, businesses, in this case, are forced to do something—I doubt his profit on the tires was \$1,000 or \$800. So does he start selling his product at a loss, or are we really just sending out the message that we don't like his business and he can move? Those are the issues we run into. It's hard to justify to somebody who gives you a call like that. Fortunately, my nephew, who works at Campeau's in Dalhousie, benefits from it, but the taxes don't come back to Ontario, and that's a problem.

Constituents also often complain in my office about extra fees and taxes on purchases. It affects their budget and affects their spending. When you add that to increased power costs and the increased cost of living in Ontario now, it really is bringing more and more people—you know, we have a province that sometimes brags about the jobs it is creating, but we have the largest percentage of minimum-wage jobs in the country. That's Ontario. That's not something we ever experienced before. People on minimum wage are having a very hard time these days.

It's great to see the Minister of Energy come out with a program that helps people on minimum wage, but all that does is make sure that the rest of the population pays, which raises the price for everybody else and then increases the number of people who need help. It's just a vicious circle.

We have to be careful when we put fees on something like recycling, because there's no better way of putting a system in place that allows the distributors—the people who are creating the garbage—the opportunity to save money. If it's just a government-imposed fee that has no impact, there's no incentive for them to look at how to cut costs or cut the waste they're producing. I think that was our clear message: We have to make sure that this bill allows manufacturers to actually cut waste, and if they cut it, they get rewarded for it. That's the way our system works, and it has worked very well. And that's the way our competitors—the people we're competing with—work as well. So it's interesting to see some of these things.

Another issue: The minister must make progress reports available to the House on a regular basis. We just saw recently that the Financial Accountability Officer showed that the government is not forthcoming with information that would enable the public and MPPs to hold it to account. Just a couple of weeks ago, the Financial Accountability Officer issued a letter to the House talking about an amendment that came forth that the government had promised was going to meet his concerns about the cap-and-trade bill, Bill 172, where he had come forth and said that the transparency wasn't there.

0910

The government was able to give out billions—not millions; billions—of dollars in credits and the taxes they were collecting, with no accountability. In the committee I sit on, deputants came through with the same message. We put some amendments, and the third party put some amendments as well—all voted down by the government.

But the really telling part was at the end—the last amendment. The government rushed in at the last minute, put it on the table and told us that they had discussed it with the Financial Accountability Officer and he was very happy with the amendment and that it answered all his concerns. And the next day we saw a letter saying, “Not only does it not answer my concerns, but they haven't even talked to me.” I know we're not allowed to use certain words in this House, but what else could it be? It's mind-boggling that this government would resort to that.

We saw the first debt retirement charge update given by the Minister of Finance in 2012—years late. This was years after it was supposed to be retired—just recently done. Where is this money going? It's like a candy store: Any time they get their hand in the jar, the money disappears. We see that over and over again. The government acted only after the Auditor General issued a report. His job was not to babysit this government, and that's just what we're seeing. This report was years after this has been retired. Why are you still charging it?

It's similar to the Drive Clean test: overcharging, and the tax—much more than the test cost—coming back to the government, which of course is illegal. The government has, in this case, a fee for the service, and they were making tens of millions of dollars off this. That was the real reason they didn't want to cut this. The test no longer has any value.

It was interesting: I was meeting with some of the car companies in my riding just last week, and I asked about some of the regulations they would like to see eliminated. They mentioned Drive Clean. They said, “We're doing it, and the government is paying us for it, but it's a useless program because it just reads the computer.” And there are all kinds of problems if they're going to do a safety check on it through the program—maybe this applies more not to the actual dealers but to second-hand car retailers—and they have to disconnect the battery at one point to do some of the tests. Then they have to drive around for three, four or five hours to drive 500 kilometres to reset the damned computer.

At first I thought that was a little bit of a story, but I bought a new vehicle last year and left the gas cap off for a few minutes, and of course the computer tripped and said there was engine trouble. It took over 500 kilometres to reset that in the summer—it takes longer in the winter-time. Those are the types of things. So now they have to pay a staff member to go out and drive a car around for five hours. That's real time and real money. You're talking about a program that is a complete waste of time, energy and money, let alone putting an extra 500 kilometres on a vehicle, just so they can reset the computer so it passes the test. One has to really think about what's going on here.

We look at the government reports, and look no further back than the gas plants scandal: months and months of the committee trying to get these documents that they were entitled to. Only when the committee went to full-day sessions in the summer were they actually able to pass a motion to release the documents. And then this government, as forthright as they are—months and months of denying until the Speaker ruled that they had to do it; they had to release these documents. Then, when we got the documents, they were redacted, whited out, which again was not allowed.

The ministers talk about progress reports, but you can see why we, in the opposition, are really worried about, “Are they going to be forthright? Are we really going to get any information of substance, or is this just another case of information that we will never see?” It looks good on paper, but again, you have to judge this government by its actions. Past actions should predict future actions, and quite frankly, that would be rather scary.

Other cases of obstruction include the refusal to comply with a committee's request for documents; freedom-of-information rules; and the refusal to disclose key fiscal and financial information.

Making these progress reports mandatory doesn't make them happen. We were hoping that we'd see a bit of a change here. Maybe we will. We'll take the government at its word, and that can be dangerous at times.

Phasing out eco taxes that drive up the consumer process and depress demand—the government is notorious for collecting vast sums of money and being unable to spend it wisely. We see that today, as record levels of revenue—they're well over double the revenue that they collected when they came to power, and yet we still see cuts in health care. We see demonstration schools being closed. We see autism being cut. It's an example that the taxes are there but they aren't being spent wisely. The eco taxes are regressive because they affect everybody, regardless of income.

We need to take some of the burden off the people. They're really challenged in this economy, challenged in making a good living, something that we used to be very proud of, something that we used to see residents from many other provinces come to Ontario for, because it was a land where you would get a job. It's not that way anymore.

The manufacturing industry and the recycling industry have a role to play in ensuring that waste is reduced, and government must stop trying to manage it. Give them a target, let them work towards it and give them a financial incentive if they do a better job or they're able to obtain revenue from it. If they don't do a good job, of course, then they have to pay for it. I think that's really the only way we're going to encourage the ability to get in there and see improvements.

With many different companies coming up with better ideas, it gets infectious. People are comparing company to company. There's that drive to do a better job. If you don't reward them for doing a better job, it takes away that incentive, and unfortunately, the government really has no incentive to ensuring that somebody does a better job. The incentive is hiring more cops to go out there and check. That's really not an incentive, and it doesn't spur the same innovation as we hope to see.

We're looking at driving some competition. The economy thrives on competition; we're built on it. It's a constant pressure from businesses to outdo one another. I think that's what this bill really needs to get at. Let the industry look at ways to improve, and let them benefit from those improvements. When we set rates by the government, it just falls apart.

The blue box, as any recycling program, is a partnership between the municipalities, manufacturers and the recyclers. All parties have a stake in making sure that it's a success. Manufacturers can reduce the downstream costs and improve their environmental credentials by ensuring their product does not go to landfill. If there's a revenue benefit to that, they will work at doing that. They will work in their own stream to bring their product back to themselves so they can reuse the parts, instead of using up a scarce resource.

Recycling firms already have a ready and convenient supply chain for raw materials. As we see, a lot of these materials—for instance, on the tire side, a recycler in my area can't get enough tires. He would take more tires if he could, because he has a market for rubber mats. He sells them all over the world. He even put in a process

that allows him to take the huge truck tires, agricultural tires, that are not that easy to recycle. He put the process in place because he needed more supply, because it was a money-making venture for him. I think those are the things we have to encourage. Instead of looking at a time where we can't get rid of tires, we see now such a competition for them. We're not using it enough to send to the recycling stream.

0920

We talk about some of the issues we had with waste diverters in our riding—I know I'm running out of time here. One of my landfill operators, a large operator, put in place a system to generate electricity from the methane gas that's produced. He would like to be able to generate more electricity because he is flaring off gas, which of course is a carbon source. He has the system in place; the infrastructure is there. He can't get approval from the government, and he's been waiting for months—and, I guess, years—now. One would think, "Maybe the government doesn't need the green energy in this case."

But they turned around in my area and gave out two large wind turbine projects a few months ago, as well as a large solar project. So on one hand we see a solution to their energy costs that is somewhat manageable—there is the ability to delay production of the electricity until it's more valuable to us—but we've gone ahead with a wind project where we have no control on when it produces power. Is that an integrated plan or just confusion? I think that's what we're seeing.

Another recycling company in my riding contracted with the government to handle a lot of recycling. They're trying to add a basic shredder to the process. They can't get an approval from the Ministry of the Environment. It's taking months. They're shredding hard plastic. This is really not an environmental question. Why is it taking months? Their warehouses are filling up with product because they can't recycle it. The market needs it, and the government is on their backs because they're not getting rid of their recycling material. A simple shredder has held up the process for months and months. It just doesn't make sense. It shows, again, the government getting in the way.

When I was involved with the council in South Glengarry, the process to get our licence on a landfill extension took six or seven years and \$5 million on a site that was a long-time landfill site. Eventually, we got approval for it, but it just speaks about the government getting in the way. Precious tax dollars were wasted that could have been put into roads and bridges. In the end, it was just wasted and the time spent. We had many meetings with the ministry, and it was just time wasted.

I see that my time is up. Thanks, Speaker, for opportunity to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Good morning, Speaker. I hope you enjoyed yourself at the baseball game last night.

It's a pleasure to follow my friend from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry. As you know, Speaker, he's a

fan of the Detroit Red Wings and not the Toronto Maple Leafs.

What he's talking about here is some of the provisions that are missing in this legislation—how this bill could have been improved. He's also talking about landfills and what we're doing with the trash we don't get to use in the blue box or the red box or the green box.

Unfortunately, we're seeing more and more valuable farmland in Ontario being used as dumping sites. As municipal councillors, we all know the process and the length of time it takes to go through the process of siting a landfill. Yet we don't seem to be doing much these days to boost recycling efforts.

This bill is a legislative formula more than anything else, as opposed to: We're going to increase the number of recyclable materials we collect, and we're going to force industry to come up with new ways of recycling the products they manufacture. That's where this bill could have made some real headway if we got into the packaging—the over-packaging—of the goods we buy, be they plastic, be they paper or be they a combination of the two.

We do have to cut down on the waste we generate in Ontario, and we do have to cut down on what we're sending to landfills. But more than anything, we have to increase what we're putting into the blue box, because we have to do that diversion as well as anything else.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? The member for York South–Weston.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you for recognizing me, Mr. Speaker. I wanted just to remind people why this act is necessary. I think it's important that we remember that Ontario generates close to 12 million tonnes of waste each year right now, and that each Ontarian generates about 2.3 kilograms of waste material per day—per day.

Overall, the rate has been sort of stable at 25% for the past decade. We haven't been able to make strides. Through the existing waste diversion programs that we have right now in Ontario, we're able to divert about a million tonnes each year.

We do well on the residential side; 47% of our residential waste is diverted from disposal. However, we don't do as well on the industrial, commercial and institutional side. Those sectors continue to be low. We're only able to divert about 13%.

So, again, why is this act necessary? We need a new approach to effectively increase waste diversion, to keep valuable resources out of the landfill and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our waste stream. This act would be the pillar of the government's strategy to preserve resources and recover valuable materials from the waste currently lost to landfill.

Producers, as we've heard, would be responsible for recovering the resources. This gives them an incentive to design long-lasting, reusable, easily recyclable products that hopefully will never need to be discarded and will never need to be sent to the landfill. This will benefit Ontarians, our environment and our economy, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to add some comments to the speech by the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry on Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act. We're in third reading of this bill, and our critic, the member from Huron–Bruce, has been very active on this file.

The Ontario PCs have long championed a plan to increase recycling and reduce waste through innovation and competition among businesses in the private sector. Under our plan, we would set measurable and achievable recycling targets for businesses, establish environmental standards, and enforce the rules.

I think I can say that I did play a role. Many years ago—at least 10 years ago—I had a private member's bill that basically would accomplish the same thing. The bill was called Product Stewardship, where government would set targets for particular products but let industry figure out how to achieve those targets. That's more or less what the government is trying to do with this bill, so I'm pleased that they have both followed on my private member's bill and on the PC policy.

We did ask for a number of amendments, and our critic worked very hard toward achieving those amendments. It is my understanding that many of them have gone through.

I guess it comes down to how the government implements this now. They have not the greatest record when it comes to actually implementing things, but the general idea is a sound one. We wish them well and hope that they actually are able to deliver in the case of this product stewardship, Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: From the outset, I'd like to state that the goals in the act are supportable and welcome on behalf of the Ontario NDP.

Bill 151 enacts the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act and the Waste Diversion Transition Act.

In my role as our critic for economic development, infrastructure and jobs, I've done some research.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It's a little loud. It's unusual: Usually ministers are quiet, but today they're leading the charge in the noise. I'd appreciate if you could—I'm not sure if you want to be recognized; you're standing up all the time there. I'm not sure what the Deputy Premier is doing. If you want to do a seminar, you might want to go out in the hall.

Continue. Thanks.

0930

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thanks, Speaker. I don't know if you can reset the clock on a two-minute hit, but I certainly would appreciate some leeway.

Anyhow, as I was saying, I've done a little bit of research on my critic file—a lot of research—and I've come across an economic theory out of the United States. I want to give credit to John Fullerton from the Capital

Institute. The theory is referred to as regenerative capitalism. I believe that it's only stated as such because in the United States it's difficult for people to say democratic socialism.

In all manners, this new economic theory is similar to what is happening in the Waste-Free Ontario Act, Bill 151. It calls upon us to recognize the failure of our current economic system as a whole and the paradigm in which the masters of finance rely on all of the resources of the planet to fuel economic generation, whereas that should be reversed. It should be that the finance fuels environmental stability and fuels all the wonderful things that we enjoy and appreciate as Ontarians in our environment.

This gets close to that. We can support it, but it certainly needs some more work. I appreciate the time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I just want to let the member know I let him go over to make up for the not-stopping-the-clock time he was concerned about.

Back to the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for two minutes.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I thank the members from Windsor–Tecumseh, York South–Weston, Parry Sound–Muskoka and Essex for their comments.

I can just tell the member from Windsor–Tecumseh that if the Leafs would get better, maybe that would encourage the Red Wings to get better and win some more Stanley Cups. I would like to see them do better, but the competition is always good.

The member opposite was talking about the relatively good job that we've been doing at 25%. I guess that's on the residential side. That's really not a very good target. I think we've got to get much higher. The landfill sites are filling up. I see one of the landfills I was talking about with the trouble from the methane approvals. He's taking garbage from Toronto. I don't know if any of it is going to Michigan anymore. It's a relatively large landfill, but it's filling up with truck after truck coming down the 401. These are huge landfill sites, and we'd like to get more and more out of these sites.

I know that in Alexandria, in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, they have a recycling firm. They're always on the edge. It's supported by the municipality. It's an expensive process for a municipality to take on. We have to get industry back involved.

Certainly, 13% on the industry side is dismal. It's something we have to improve on. The only way we're going to do that is by letting them innovate. Let them make the changes. If we're just going to bill them for something that their neighbour does, there's no incentive in getting better because they're going to have to pay the bill anyway, so why waste the money? If they can spend money and save it in the end, that's where we're going to get real results. That's where we need to go for some of these changes.

I think, from talking to our critic, when the bill died last time, they did accept a lot of our changes that they had refused the last time, but there's still more to do with this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's always a pleasure to be called upon in this House on behalf of the good constituents in the riding of Windsor–Tecumseh.

We're back with what we were hoping would be a new and improved Bill 151, the misnamed Waste-Free Ontario Act. We were hoping the Liberals on the committee on social policy would have been able to keep an open mind. We had been hoping the Liberals on that committee would have tossed aside their prepared speaking notes. We were hoping the people who took the time to appear as delegations would walk away feeling their time was well spent.

You know who I really feel sorry for, though, Speaker? I feel sorry for the municipal taxpayers in Ontario. Not all of the more than 400 municipalities offer what we refer to as the blue box recycling program, but it's offered in enough places with reasonable population numbers that close to 90% of the people in Ontario have the ability to use the service should they decide to do so. We certainly encourage everyone to do that because it is the right thing to do.

It's also the right thing that those who produce what is collected in our recycling containers should pay the total cost that municipalities have to put out to provide the collection of those goods. That's fair; that's reasonable; that is the right thing to do. However, as we've seen elsewhere, the producers haven't bought in to that argument entirely yet.

Speaker, in case you're not aware of the situation in Vancouver these days: For years, the mayor and council have been making noises about the growing cost of providing the blue box recycling program. They did the math and they found they weren't getting a fair return. Municipal taxpayers were paying to subsidize the true cost of providing the service.

The theory behind the program of the recycling of waste is that the producers should pay as part of the cost of doing business. That's the intent behind this bill, and a laudable intent it is. That's all fine and good on paper as a theory, but when you go to balance your books at city hall and prepare the collection bills for your homeowners, you discover this thorny issue of a subsidy. Your folks are paying part of the producers' costs. You determine that it can't go on unchallenged, and you send a loud and clear message to the producers, "Hey, buddy. You're costing me money. Pay up." When buddy shrugs and walks away, what do you do?

Mayor Gregor Robertson knew what he would do, and so did my friend Councillor Raymond Louie. I used to serve on the board at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities with Ray; he's currently the FCM president. He's also Vancouver's designated acting mayor and Chair of the finance and services committee. Gregor, Raymond and the municipal politicians told the waste producers, "Enough is enough. We're not going to take it anymore. If you don't pay our total costs for this collection service, you can do it yourselves."

That is what the Liberals and this committee have opened up as a possibility in Ontario. If this bill doesn't go the way the Liberals say it will, watch out. AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, asked the committee to make sure, during this transition, that there was a municipal advisory body included in the framework of the bill, this misnamed Waste-Free Ontario Act. It was a simple request. Municipalities are providing the service. AMO wanted reps from the city of Toronto, from the Regional Public Works Commissioners of Ontario, from AMO itself and from the Municipal Waste Association to be at the table. In other words, they needed a voice while this was unfolding.

They wanted (a) to be paid the total actual cost incurred by all municipalities with respect to the diversion of blue box waste, and (b) the total actual revenue generated by all municipalities with respect to the diversion of blue box waste. They knew these numbers would have to be verified; they also called for that. They wanted to be consulted. And, Speaker, everyone in this room knows that the Liberals make it a point on a pretty regular basis around here to puff up their chests, point to themselves and say, "We have consulted, or we will be consulting, or we are consulting." Sometimes that consulting is actually more insulting because it just doesn't happen.

AMO says, "Folks, we do the work. This is important stuff. You need to listen up before this bill is done." Well, we soon found out at committee that indeed most of the work was done long before the bill even heard from the first delegation. The pretense of consultation, the sham of consultation, was really quite embarrassing. You looked around the room and audience members were just shaking their heads. The industry lords and ladies, time after time, said straight out, "We know what we're doing. We don't need to listen to the municipal voices. We've got this." Well, they may get something, and they won't like it and don't expect it.

I tell you, Speaker, there was a big dark cloud overhead this morning, and it's not going to go away anytime soon. Let's just call it the Vancouver example, the Vancouver experiment and the Vancouver lesson that should have been learned. This bill was misnamed the Waste-Free Ontario Act, and may lead to some major municipalities in this province tossing in the towel if they don't have their costs fully covered. Hey, if they can do it in Vancouver, they can do it here. Think about it.

Municipalities could end up pulling out of this deal altogether, and then what? There are only a couple of choices: More waste ends up in the landfill, or the producers form a monopoly, collect and haul their own paper, cans, tins and bottles as best they can, and the title of this misnamed bill gets changed to the waste generation act of Ontario.

0940

Speaker, we tried at committee. We offered amendments and we tried to convince the Liberals they were heading down a dangerous slope. Municipalities do the work. They're the experts. They know what's involved. They know how to contain the cost. They wanted the

Liberals to recognize this and give them a voice in how this bill was unfolding and improved on a go-forward basis. I don't mind telling you, Speaker, they are disappointed but putting on a brave face. They accept that in theory producers will face full responsibility for the costs of recycling waste from their products and packaging, and it has been a long time coming. They remind us that our municipalities have achieved the highest residential diversion rates in North America, and they will continue to be involved in waste diversion, as 80% of all waste is not diverted.

So yes, AMO, the municipal sector, is keenly interested to start the transition to the new system that builds on their current provision of effective and convenient waste diversion services. Here's a quote for you, Speaker: "Essentially, we just want to get on with the transition, as the current waste disposal act is flawed and we are tired of fighting every year to be paid fairly for the waste diversion services municipalities provided two years ago!!" So every year, they go after the money that was owed to them two years previously. That sentence, by the way, Speaker, ended with two exclamation points. You can read into that as you will.

Before I move on, Speaker, the annual FCM conference is next week in Winnipeg. Raymond Louie's term is over, and he will—you're probably going.

Mr. Steve Clark: No, I'm not going.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: He will be replaced by my buddy from Ontario, First Vice-President Clark Somerville. I served three years on the FCM board with Clark. He's from Halton Hills. Congratulations to both of them for their volunteer service on behalf of all our Canadian municipalities.

Speaker, I should place tongue firmly in cheek here for a moment and thank the Liberal committee members for their fine display of the three Rs during our hearings and clause-by-clause consideration of the bill and our proposed amendments: They certainly recycled the answers on why they were voting down our proposals; they reused them over and over again; and they reduced the contributions from many of our delegations down to a polite "Thank you for coming in and making us aware of your concerns."

Speaker, that's the downside of what happens in a democracy with a majority government. The party in power determines the makeup of a committee, stacks it with a majority of their own members, and lip service gets paid to the concept of public consultation and input from the opposition parties. Legislation which could have been greatly improved slips away with little change. And you wonder why opposition members say they have grave concerns with the next committee that's going to hit the road around here, looking at financial contributions to political parties, because of the Liberals stacked on that committee, and any proposals that they will hear later on in clause-by-clause can simply just be voted down by the majority.

Speaker, let me take a very quick detour. Did you know it's Injured Workers' Day in Ontario? I know you

did. Since this bill is about recycling, let me just for a couple of moments here reuse a poem written by Bill Mahoney, the resident poet of Steelworkers Local 1005 in Hamilton. It's called *An Injury to One*.

Support the injured workers, heed them when they call;
An injury to one is an injury to all!
Far too many are injured when they go to work—
Then the boss denies their injury, says they're not hurt.
The owners of industry are greedy and mean—
They value workers far less than a machine.
When Jeannie had her accident—they said she was a fake;
Even though her X-ray showed a major break.
Could you kindly tell me what more does it take?
The board wants to retrain Mary, send her back to school,
But she's been away so long she feels like a damn fool.
She knows that she could learn new skills, if they just gave her the time;
But they want to fast-track her—just to save a dime.
Since George had his accident, he's confined to a wheelchair.
Some people look right through him as though he wasn't there.
His wheelchair has become a rolling prison cell
As his compensation board is putting him through hell.
Far too many workers are being forced to fight,
Just to get the benefits that ought to be their right.

Bill Mahoney, from his book *Rebel Rhymes*—he's the Poet Laureate for Steelworkers Local 1005 in Hamilton. Thank you, Bill Mahoney, and thank you, Speaker.

By the way, Speaker, we're all invited after question period today to go out on the lawn and have a bit of pizza. Two injured workers, Richard Hudon and Peter Page, started a bike ride to raise awareness of the situation facing injured workers in Ontario a week ago. They were joined by a long-time advocate for injured workers, Allen Jones.

They started in Windsor. I was pleased to be there at the start, along with my colleague from Windsor West. They hit the road to Chatham, Wallaceburg, Sarnia, London, Brantford, St. Catharines, Hamilton and Mississauga—600 kilometres—and they have asked you and everyone in the House to join them for pizza when we're done after question period. They'll be hosting a rally out there. What a wonderful way to recognize Injured Workers' Day in Ontario.

This bill, Bill 151, was misnamed the Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2016. It actually injures no one, but it is painful to me that the Liberals were not so accommodating to the proposed amendments put forth by the NDP and the Conservatives during the clause-by-clause read-

ing. Again: a bill full of early promise with a title worthy of a small sound bite, but not really living up to its full expectations.

I guess it's somewhat of a metaphor for this government—a government that comes in with a brave promise of a bright new future, an open, a transparent government that's going to work hard on behalf of the people of Ontario. And what do we see? We see bill after bill be time-allocated, debate shut down so the opposition members are prevented from improving it in any way, from bringing the voices of the people we talk to back to the Liberals and saying, "Look, these are people saying that what you have put on the table is not exactly what they were hoping for, and here are the reasons why. Here are the reasons why we don't think this bill is good enough. We want you to listen to them, but instead, we don't have that opportunity, because bills get allocated around here too frequently."

Time and time again we're told this Liberal government was going to be the most open, the most progressive, and the budgets were going to be good, but there are all these poison pills in there. You can't support a budget that's causing so much damage to sectors of the economy, to certain segments, be it in health care, be it in education, be it to the injured workers of Ontario. We have to stand up and we have to say to the Liberals across the aisle, "You could have done so much better. This bill could have been so much improved if you would have listened to the municipal voices in Ontario when they came to you and said, 'We really need to be at the table.'"

They didn't come right out and say, "You can't trust industry on this. You can't leave industry all by themselves. We have to help shepherd this through. We have to be there as an advisory body." We tried. We stood up time and time again to make the case, and indeed, the Liberals said, "We hear you. We're listening, but we're not going to do anything about it, because we have the majority. You can talk all day if you want, but at end of the day, we're going to vote your idea down." And time after time after time after time, that's exactly what they did, Speaker.

0950

I felt sorry for some of my Conservative friends who were on that committee. They worked hard. They came up with—I won't say hundreds; I'll say dozens of amendments. Maybe they got one through; I'm not sure. I think we had just a couple that they accepted, which I found quite surprising, actually, because with a couple of them I said, "Oh, God, are we going to go through this again or should I just withdraw it now?" Then they said, "No, no, no. We're actually going to accept that one," which brightens your day for about 10 seconds. Then when you bring in something really substantive after that and you say, "This is good. This is what we need," they say, "No, we have the majority and we're going to ram it right back at you. We're not going to accept that amendment today."

So the bill is the Waste-Free Ontario Act, and it's a big-sounding name. Who can't support a waste-free

Ontario? No more waste in Ontario ever; no more. It's all going in the blue box. Well, yeah, no, maybe. Uh-uh. Not gonna happen. It's not going to be waste-free at all, Speaker. But it's a good name. It's catchy.

Somewhere there will be a little newspaper clip that says, "The Waste-Free Ontario Act has passed," and people won't read much beyond that. They'll say, "Oh, those Liberals up there, they must be doing something right. Waste-free: no more waste in Ontario." They won't look much beyond the headlines. The sad part of life is, it's not going to be waste-free at all.

The municipal voice: I'll tell you, municipal taxpayers are as upset as anybody else when the tax bill comes. They do not want to pay more of their hard-earned money to subsidize a producer of waste who should be paying the full cost of waste. If you produce a product, Speaker—you might have the factory and whatever it is, maybe a newspaper—you can't just close your door and close your eyes once that product leaves the plant. You have the responsibility to your province, to your country, to your economy, to your environment—this is an environmental bill. You have the responsibility to make sure that your product doesn't pollute the environment.

Behind this bill the focus is full producer responsibility, but the municipalities haven't seen that yet. As I've said earlier, they're tired of subsidizing the cost that the producer should be paying. They don't want to do it anymore. They're not doing it anymore in Vancouver and they don't want to do it anymore in Ontario. They want a better accounting procedure. They wanted a voice at that table, and they wouldn't get it from this Liberal government. The Liberals would not give the municipalities a voice at the table to make sure that they were getting their fair share of the revenue that was generated from the waste collected in the Blue Box Program and that our municipal taxpayers do not have to pay more than their fair share. The producers should be paying the full cost because it is their responsibility to pay the full cost for the products that they produce. That hasn't been happening.

I'm not convinced we're ever going to see it from this Liberal government. They have a lot of friends in industry and a lot of friends behind this bill. They sat and listened and took their concerns into account, more so than they listened to the municipal politicians who were there and said, "You have to start listening to us as well."

Let me just wrap it up, Speaker, and conclude with a simple statement. I know it's not going to impress you at all, but I am disappointed, because the people of Ontario deserve better. Our municipal leaders deserve so much more from this Liberal government, and they feel let down by the way this bill was handled.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm pleased to rise and add my voice to Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act.

Mr. Speaker, this proposed legislation, if passed, would help us to divert more waste from landfills. Studies have shown that Ontario's existing waste diversion programs

can create more jobs than waste disposal, because waste disposal is not labour-intensive. Recycling and resource recovery is more labour-intensive. It requires lots of people. It creates lots more jobs, and well-paying jobs, Mr. Speaker.

During the public hearings at social policy, we heard broad support from a range of stakeholders, including municipalities, producers, service providers and environmental organizations. It has been clear that this bill has broad support from the stakeholders as well as the majority of the members. It is time that this bill passes the third reading and that this proposed legislation receives royal assent and becomes an act so that all the relevant stakeholders can benefit from it, because this is a good bill. It's a good bill for the environment, a good bill for the economy and a good bill for the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's always interesting to listen to the member from Niagara Falls with his—throwing in some of the poet laureate stuff.

With regard to Bill 151—great title: Waste-Free Ontario Act. But the reality is that there are so many things that we could be doing a better job of. In my initial speech on Bill 151, I talked about the ICI sector: industrial, commercial and institutional. There was a little bit of finger-pointing on the government's side when it came to the ICI sector.

The reality is, we could do a much better job if we allowed the ICI to participate in the Blue Box Program. I'm not talking about the products that they use to manufacture; I'm talking about the products that happen just because you have a group of people working in a manufacturing facility, a business. We've lost an opportunity, with Bill 151, to try to work with our stakeholders in a much better way, in a much more inclusive way, and try to incorporate some of the things they've been asking for for many, many years. Bill 151 was the opportunity, the window, to allow that, and we've bypassed that right now.

Our critic, the member from Huron-Bruce, has been working extremely hard to try to bring forward substantive, positive amendments to Bill 151. That's what our role is in opposition. It would have been nice if there had been a little more back-and-forth discussion, but unfortunately, that didn't happen in this case. A missed opportunity, I guess, is what we'll talk about with Bill 151.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to you. Always nice seeing you in the chair. You keep us in line.

This morning there were two big messages that I took from the comments that came from the member from Tecumseh. I always enjoy sitting with him here in the House. We tend to observe and listen quite a bit in this House. Like many of our colleagues, we do the same thing when we go back to the riding.

The one issue that he did bring up this morning—which wasn't related to this bill but is very important—is

that I hope each and every one of you takes the opportunity to go out and meet up with the injured workers who are going to be out on the lawn. I had the opportunity of actually going to sing songs with them last night and have a bottle of water and some cake with them. I listened to some of the individuals that have been affected through their work, and to their frustration, their desperation, and the shattering of their hopes to provide for themselves. The Women of Inspiration were there for their 10th year, I believe, sleeping on the lawn to show their support for these injured workers. So please take the time, over the course of your day, to go out there and meet up with these individuals.

The major message that I took from the member from Tecumseh is: This is a missed opportunity that the government had to really engage and listen to the municipal leaders who are going to be so affected by this piece of legislation, and a missed opportunity to really engage with them and take some of their comments that they were putting forward. At the end of the day, this is something that will fall on their shoulders once again. They're the ones that are going to be challenged in order to make decisions to maintain the services that they have in their communities. They're the ones that will have to make the tough decisions with regard to their budgets to make sure this happens within their community.

Again, the thrust of this message was the missed opportunity. Is it a step forward? Yes, it is a step forward, Mr. Speaker. But it could have been an opportunity for a much, much greater step. And again, I just need to stress the point that this is a lost opportunity.

1000

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. David Zimmer: I'm pleased to offer some comments on the Waste-Free Ontario Act. I think it's important, when we're considering the details in the act, that we consider the background premise to the act. That premise or background is that the fact is, Ontario's landfill capacity is projected to last less than 20 years. Increased diversion is necessary to extend the lifespan of those existing disposal sites. Now, 20 years may seem like a very, very long time, but in fact the way our population is growing and the amount of increased waste that is required to be disposed of, I rather expect that when it says the time frame for filling up those landfill sites is less than 20 years, it's probably going to be substantially less than 20 years.

In addition to the necessity of it, I want to comment on the cost savings. On average, disposal remains significantly cheaper than resource recovery. The Blue Box Program is estimated to cost, on average, double the cost of handling waste. The average cost to collect and landfill waste is about \$125 a tonne as opposed to blue box, which is about \$250 a tonne. Recycling may be less costly than disposal, where substantial revenues can be made from the sale of the recycled materials.

Let me say something about the economic benefits. The waste management sector contributes about \$2.1 bil-

lion to Ontario's GDP. This is nearly as large as the contribution to GDP as we get from paper manufacturing in Ontario.

And of course, there are the environmental benefits. In 2013, greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector accounted for about 5% of Ontario's waste.

These are matters that we must keep in mind when considering this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Windsor–Tecumseh has two minutes.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Sounds like a sentence. Thank you, Speaker.

Let me thank the members from Mississauga–Brampton South, Dufferin–Caledon, Algoma–Manitoulin and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

I think the member from Dufferin–Caledon really hit it on the head when she talked about a missed opportunity. That's what this bill is. It's a missed opportunity that the government could have done better.

For those that may have been listening during my 20 minutes, I said how disappointing it was for an opposition member on the committee to listen to the delegations, to do the clause-by-clause; how disappointing it was when the Liberals stuck to their speaking notes—

Hon. David Zimmer: What?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Stuck to their speaking notes. The thing about it, Speaker, for those who listened to what the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs had to say, he just stuck to his speaking notes. Nothing what he made reference to had any way, shape or form to anything I said this morning. He wasn't listening. He doesn't care. He had his speaking notes, and that—

Hon. David Zimmer: That's because you're all fluff—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. We're not at a football game. If you want to yell, go out in the hall and yell. Thank you, Minister.

Continue.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. And thank you, Minister. I enjoy your company, as you know, but when it comes time to give two minutes on what somebody just said, you would think somebody would have the somewhat occasional bearing to say, "Yes, I'll listen and I'll say something to what he just said." Nobody did that. Nobody on the government side gave any reference at all to why the municipalities weren't listened to. That was the focus of my 20 minutes.

They didn't listen then; they're not listening now. That's the legacy of this Liberal government. They just don't give a damn. They don't listen to anyone.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): A point of order, the member from Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker. I mistakenly identified the previous speaker, and I want to sincerely apologize and acknowledge that his riding is in fact Windsor–Tecumseh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member can correct her record.

Further debate?

Mr. Mike Colle: In reference to Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act, as a number of members know, it's

quite a complex piece of legislation. It's over 120 pages, with some very significant changes in the administration, the promotion, the establishment of various processes by producers of waste—industrial, commercial and institutional. And for individuals and consumers, it affects their interface with waste and reuse and recycling. It deals with the Environmental Protection Act and how it impacts on waste reduction.

There are numerous complex new mechanisms put in place essentially to update an act from 2002, which tried to introduce the whole notion of waste reduction. As you know, this whole area of waste reduction changes as manufacturing processes change, as new technologies come into play and new public awareness, and as information comes forward from all the consumers, from industry and from local elected officials. There is a multiplicity of partners in waste reduction. It's not just the government; it's not just municipalities; it's all the producers, everything from agricultural products to high-tech products.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we have entered into a new age of instant disposal. You're old enough—or young enough—to remember when we used to go to the corner store or drug store to get tubes for our televisions. Remember? The young ones probably forgot that, but that's what we did. That TV that you bought, that your parents bought and saved up for maybe a year to get, you kept for a lifetime and then you replaced the tubes. Now, as you know, what happens is that if the colour contrast on your new high-def television is a bit off, it gets thrown on the side of the road. Have you ever heard of a television repairman or woman? They don't exist anymore. Everything is disposed of.

I was at the Ingram Drive waste disposal site a couple of weeks ago. I brought my Ford Ranger up there filled with all kinds of stuff from a friend of mine who was closing up his business. You can see the amount of waste that is—they've got a section for electronics, a section for drywall, a section for paper and household garbage. It's ongoing, around-the-clock. In fact, the Ingram Drive site in Toronto is open 24 hours a day now, except for Sundays, because people are constantly bringing yard waste—everything. And then there's the other aspect of it, where you can go get your compost. They were lined up, because it is compost season, a mile down Ingram Drive to get their compost, which is the result of putting in their yard waste.

So there are many complex aspects of this bill. It is an updating of a system that needs updating. The major change here is that there are some real administrative and legal sanctions now to encourage, cajole, and also bring to order an industry that produces millions of products a year. On the production side, they are to have a responsibility. In other words, they just can't keep producing and expecting that the government, the local government—that somehow these big products and the boxes that they come in, whether it be tires or television sets or electronics, magically disappear. Well, they don't. So this bill essentially puts serious sanctions into place to reduce

our waste and to create waste reduction as part of a new circular economy. That's the big change in this bill.

I think there is so much work, as everybody agrees, that has to be done on this front. We are behind, and that's why we need some really strong legislation: Bill 151. Is it going to solve all the problems? No, but it's really needed. I think everybody agrees with this.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think it's time to move on. As a result, I move that this question be now put.

Mr. Steve Clark: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I don't think you can do a point of order before he finishes what he's saying.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): No, not at this point.

Go ahead, finish, please.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sit down. Thank you.

Mr. Mike Colle: I move that this question now be put, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Steve Clark: No. Absolutely not.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Mr. Steve Clark: Not enough time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Would you like to change positions here?

Mr. Steve Clark: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Okay. Mr. Colle has moved that the question now be put. I am satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow the question to be put to the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I believe the noes have it.

All those in favour of the motion that the question be now put, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I believe the nays have it.

This will be dealt with after question period on the vote.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I move adjournment of the debate.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): No. When you guys know what you're doing, we'll let you know.

It being close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning. And thank you for all the yelling. That really helps.

The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before we begin with introductions, I'd like to remind the members of my request yesterday: If you do not have the members that you're going to introduce, please introduce them during the time period that's allotted, and we'll do the best we can in using that time appropriately.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Toby Barrett: I do wish to introduce Rita and Romas Rickus. They're in the gallery today, and they're the parents of page captain Thomas Rickus.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm delighted to introduce student Anna Khouzam to the House today. She's from my riding, and she's here as a student youth councillor.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'd like to welcome and introduce injured worker advocates who are here with us today: Laurie Hardwick, Vern Edwards, Jessica Ponting, Alberto Lalli, Airissa Gemma, Brendan Bohn, Niveda Anandan, James Schneider, Maud Rozee, Hayley McFadyen, Indira Rupchand, Michael McDonough, Belia Berrocal and Brent Marks. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'd to welcome a number of the paramedic services here in Ontario who are joining us for an announcement today. From Halton region: Greg Sage, the chief of Halton region paramedics; and Michael Lawson, president of OPSEU Local 207 and Halton Region Paramedic Services. From Toronto: Geoff MacBride, the president of the Ontario Paramedic Association and the Toronto Paramedic Association; Michael Nolan, the director of emergency services, county of Renfrew, and former president of the Paramedic Chiefs of Canada; Brian Annett, VP of the Toronto Paramedic Association; and, joining all of them, Howard Brown and Laura Casselman from Brown and Cohen.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to introduce my very good friends Roxane Villeneuve, who translates for me in French—not that I need it, of course—and Debbie Jodoin from Ottawa, who chauffeurs me around. Thank you, ladies.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'm pleased to welcome Nancy Murray Coker to Queen's Park today. She is a proud employee of McMaster University in the school of nursing and is the mother of my legislative assistant, Meaghan Coker. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do have a couple of introductions. Before we move to the tribute, I would also like to introduce a gentleman who needs no introduction because of his deanery: Mr. Norm Sterling is in the members' gallery—former member Norm Sterling.

Hon. James J. Bradley: We miss you, Norm.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Also, the member from St. Catharines is heckling: "We miss you, Norm."

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a further introduction, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, I'll come to it.

I would also like to introduce, in the Speaker's gallery, a friend of mine from Alberta who served in six cabinet portfolios over 22 years and, in 2012 to 2015, the former Speaker of Alberta, Mr. Gene Zwozdesky. Gene, welcome.

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on an introduction.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. In addition to Norm Sterling—almost a father of Confederation—in the members' east gallery today I have Mike

Nolan, chief of paramedic services in Renfrew county. Mike, great to have you here in Queen's Park.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Hi. They're on their way here, but I want to introduce them so I don't disturb you afterwards by introducing guests when I'm not supposed to: Willem Hart and his brother Jonah Hart from my riding of Thornhill, as well as Doug Warren from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. They were here for the Pride flag-raising.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I appreciate that members are following along with my request from yesterday.

The members now will please join me in welcoming the family of the late Leonard Joseph Quilty, MPP for Renfrew South during the 26th Parliament, who are seated in the Speaker's gallery: his son Pat; his granddaughter Jennifer Quilty and her husband, Jeff Davis; and great-granddaughters Madeline and Amelia Davis. We welcome them to the Legislature for the tribute.

I would now welcome a point of order.

LEONARD QUILTY

Hon. James J. Bradley: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to Leonard Joseph Quilty, former member for Renfrew South, with a representative of each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The deputy House leader is seeking unanimous consent to pay tribute. Do we agree? Agreed.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's an honour for me to rise, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, this morning to pay tribute to Leonard Joseph Quilty, who served in this House as the member for Renfrew South from January 18, 1962, to the general election of September 25, 1963.

Len Quilty was born in Shamrock, a little hamlet in my county of Renfrew, on March 27, 1920. He was raised on the same farm that his parents, Michael and Margaret, lived on all their lives—a highly respected farmer on an inhospitable piece of land.

I want you people to know that the land up in that part of Renfrew county is not like the flatlands of southwestern Ontario. They don't call it Mount St. Patrick because it's flat. It's a really tough place to farm, but the Quilty family was there for three generations now, because Len's sons, Pat and Mike, have homes on that property today.

He was able to make a living on that farm, meagre though it may have been, because of his commitment and his work ethic, and that really paid dividends for Len in his involvement in his community as well. In addition to farming, he served his community in many, many ways. In fact, he was the secretary of the Renfrew Shamrock Telephone Co. Now, that wasn't a really big one and,

eventually, it was swallowed up by Bell. As Bill McAdam said in delivering one of the eulogies to Len at the service after his passing, it was a very small swallow—and yes, it was.

Len also went on to serve as a tax collector for the township of Admaston and a trustee for that famous one-room schoolhouse in Shamrock, and further, as a trustee for the Renfrew county separate school board.

Len had five priorities in life: family, church, farming, baseball and politics. His family is represented—the Speaker has introduced them today—by his son Pat; his granddaughter Jennifer and her spouse, Jeff Davis; and Madeline Davis and Amelia Davis, who are the great-granddaughters of Len Quilty.

His community service in so many ways and the respect he had among his farming brethren as well—he was one of these people who they went to for advice on farming matters and also business matters. He always had an interest in politics, but that interest was really cultivated more. He became a devout, lifelong member of the Liberal Party, a staunch Liberal.

Applause.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I had to get some applause from the other side. I knew that would do it.

In 1959, he was a Liberal nominee in an election against the mighty Jimmy Maloney, who was a legend in the Ottawa Valley. Len lost that election in 1959, not surprisingly. It was “Old Man Ontario,” Leslie Frost, a very popular Premier of the province, and Jimmy Maloney, a legend himself. He lost that election, but it gave him the foothold that was necessary, because after the passing of Jimmy Maloney on September 30, 1961, a by-election was called for January 18, 1962, against the Conservative standard-bearer, Con Mulvihill, a lawyer from Arnprior. Len eked out a very tight victory: 144 votes.

1040

Hon. James J. Bradley: A landslide.

Mr. John Yakabuski: A landslide. Maybe that’s where the term “Landslide Len” came from. We thought it was Hopkins.

I want to tell you about that by-election in 1962. People in rural Ontario have always taken their politics seriously, and still do. But on January 18, 1962—some people think, “It’s a by-election; it’s not going to be a big turnout. And whoever wins, it’s kind of really a default thing.” Well, the voter turnout in that by-election was greater than the general election of 1959 and greater than the following general election of 1963. So when Len Quilty was elected in a by-election in 1962, everybody in Renfrew South that wanted to vote got out and voted. They chose him as their representative here in Queen’s Park.

Now, when Len got here, he brought with him that same commitment that he had for farming and community service. He brought it here to stand for the people of Renfrew South. One of the things he challenged the government of the day on—and man, do things never change—was bridging that gap between urban and rural Ontario. So I say to the government, was Len Quilty a

politician or a prophet? Because some things just haven’t changed.

In fact, in his inaugural speech, Len Quilty talked about the necessity to extend Highway 417 for economic and safety reasons through Renfrew county. That was 1962. He talked about, “Let’s get Highway 417, a four-lane highway, through Renfrew county.” I say to the Minister of Transportation, who wouldn’t yet have been born in 1962, if you’re not going to do it for me, do it for Len.

In the 1963 general election, Len Quilty, as the incumbent, was challenged by—yes, you guessed it—my father, Paul Yakabuski. My dad defeated Len in that election, in another tight, tight race. My dad always recognized that timing is everything in politics, and he was fortunate to be a candidate for a then also very popular Ontario Premier, John Robarts. Had the roles been switched, things could have been different. We all recognize that politics sometimes is—if you’re on the winning team, it’s always a benefit for that candidate as well.

They faced off two more times, in 1967 and 1971, at which time Len decided, “I’m going back to the farm,” but he never got out of politics, and I’ll touch on that a little later. Actually, I’ll touch on it right now. In 1977, he was elected reeve of Admaston township, his beloved Admaston township, and he became the warden of Renfrew county in 1981. I remember having a conversation with my dad—yes, Premier, at the kitchen table—and he told me how Len Quilty transformed the role of warden in Renfrew county. This was his political opponent, but it never was personal. They were political—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Adversaries.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —adversaries—thank you very much—but it wasn’t personal. He recognized—don’t forget, my dad was the MPP at the time that Leonard was the warden of Renfrew county—and he talked about how Leonard transformed the role of warden in Renfrew county.

With all due respect to those who came before him, it was, in large part, a ceremonial role. But Len, because of his confidence, his political experience and the fact that he had sat here and understood how this place worked, transformed that role into one where the warden actually mattered. Provincial politicians: When Len Quilty wanted to see them, they saw him. People in the cabinet, at the cabinet level, understood that Renfrew county was important and the warden needed to be listened to. That’s how Len transformed that role, and since then, it has been forever changed.

When I first got involved in politics, I made a point of visiting Len during the campaigns and having a little chat with him. I learned much. He was always very kind to me. I had met him many times at different places—usually funerals—over the intervening years, but he was very, very kind to me during those visits.

In Len’s earlier life, as I said, his priorities—he was an avid baseball player, a pitcher for the Douglas baseball team. He loved baseball, and after he quit pitching, he became an umpire. I don’t know whether the other play-

ers liked him as much as an umpire as they did as a pitcher, but he was a very good pitcher.

The last time I saw Len Quilty was at the St. Patrick's celebration at the Dacre centre in 2012. I was just coming in. It was a beautiful day, sunny and warm. It was March, but it was just gorgeous. Mike was wheeling Len out in his wheelchair. Len was having the challenges of age and dementia at this time. Mike said to me later that it wasn't a great day. He didn't seem to recognize anybody, but he wanted to be there for the music and the celebration. As I'm walking into the Dacre centre, Len is coming out, and he looks up and he says, "John Yakabuski. How the heck are you?" So whatever it is—I don't know what effect I had, but I made that day a little better. It sure made my day better, too. I'm glad I have that memory of Len as our last meeting.

Fittingly, that Douglas baseball jacket adorned Len's casket at the public viewing at Goulet Funeral Home. The funeral service was on May 20, 2014, right in the middle of the provincial election campaign. When I drove to the funeral, I was feeling terribly because somebody had done their job on my campaign team. They had campaign signs all the way on the road to Mount St. Patrick's church. My brother and I were picking them up because we didn't think they should be stuck there during Len Quilty's funeral service. We managed to get them up. It was a wonderful funeral, a wonderful tribute to Len to be laid to rest at the same church at which he was baptized some 94 years before.

I talked about his family. I haven't mentioned—I apologize; I should have—his wonderful, devoted, beloved wife, Irene, who passed years before him. They raised a wonderful family.

I remember Father Rick Starks saying that perhaps Len would have the last joke, because the doors were open for the church for people to come in long before the service, and the place was full of mosquitoes. Father Rick Starks made a comment. He said, "Len would just love this. You might not remember what Father Rick Starks's sermon said that day, but you're never going to forget this funeral, because you spent half the time slapping mosquitoes and half the time waving at them." So Len had the last laugh at his funeral.

To paraphrase St. Paul, Len Quilty fought the good fight. He finished the race and he kept the faith, and we're all better off for having known him.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, you know, it's almost unfair to have to follow the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He's so good. John, you're so good. Thank you so much for that wonderful tribute. But I will endeavour to do my best, Speaker.

It is an honour and I am honoured to rise, on behalf of the Ontario New Democratic Party and our leader, Andrea Horwath, to pay tribute to former MPP the late Leonard Quilty.

In legislative environments, longevity is often measured, and it's a measure we use to define legacy, and understandably so. The ability to garner the trust of your

community in one election is impressive enough of a feat in its own right, but to do so over multiple elections, in the face of changing times, is something that I think resonates with us all. That's why we think of the PC administration from 1943 to 1985 in dynastic terms and why the current member from St. Catharines is affectionately known as the dean of the Legislature. In many cases it's not accomplishments or achievements that grab our attention, but the time that we have spent here.

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But what happens when this is not your story? How is legacy measured when your tenure isn't a long and storied career, but a short time as an MPP? Time can be a helpful metric, but it can also be a misleading one. No MPP is introduced to public service on the first day he or she gets elected here at Queen's Park. In fact, a seat in these benches is often just one chapter in a story of life dedicated to serving others. At our best, we run because we recognize a need in our communities, and we offer our services and ourselves to the people in an effort to help. This is what we learn when we look back on the life of Leonard Quilty.

Back in 1962, the Conservative machine was still on the rise in Ontario politics, and nowhere was this more true than in eastern Ontario. The growing popularity of the PC Party in the region transformed the riding of Renfrew South from its former Liberal dominance into a new Tory stronghold. But even as the blue wave was gathering strength, Renfrew South faced its own special brand of difficulty. You see, despite the Conservative success, both of its preceding Tory MPPs died while in office. In the first by-election, the Tory candidate won easily, capitalizing on the strength of the PC brand, but one can only imagine the shock and dismay when tragedy struck a second time, forcing a second by-election just five years later.

Leonard Quilty knew he faced incredible odds, but he also knew his neighbours needed someone they trusted to be their voice in a time of political turmoil. A lifelong resident of the Ottawa Valley, he took great pride in the uniqueness of the region and was driven to do whatever he could to help make it an even better place to live and to raise a family. A farmer by trade, Leonard was no stranger to lending a hand to his neighbours, only this time it meant putting his name on the ballot and braving a winter campaign.

In hindsight, Leonard's victory shouldn't have been a surprise. It only makes sense that the people of Renfrew South responded by electing someone driven by a sense of duty to his community—someone who could be trusted to help the riding regain its sense of stability in the midst of challenging times.

Although Leonard Quilty's Queen's Park career was interrupted by the resumption of Tory dominance in the 1963 general election, his relatively brief career as an MPP opened the door for him to return to political office in 1977, when he began an eight-year career as the reeve of Admaston township, a term that included his election as the warden of Renfrew county in 1981.

Leonard's legacy helps us remember that the Queen's Park portion of the journey, while longer for some than others, is but one chapter in lives driven by commitment to public service. It's a reminder that the commitment to community began long before we had the privilege of sitting in this chamber and, if we're as dedicated as Leonard was, will continue long after we leave this place.

Thank you to Leonard's family, represented here today by son Pat; granddaughter Jennifer and her husband, Jeff; and his great-granddaughters, Madeline and Amelia, who are with us today; and son Mike, who is unable to be with us but is watching from home. It is my hope that your memories of your father and grandfather are warmed even further by his commitment to the Ottawa Valley and the legacy he has left in Admaston and Renfrew as a result of his drive to give back to the place and the people who held a special place in his heart.

On behalf of Andrea Horwath and Ontario's New Democrats, please accept our thanks for the life and service of Leonard Quilty.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It's truly an honour and a pleasure to rise today to pay tribute to the former member for Renfrew South, Leonard Quilty, and to join my colleagues from across the House. I join the member from Essex in proclaiming that it's a very daunting task to follow the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, so I'm going to try to do my best to honour Leonard here today.

On a personal note, Mr. Speaker, I was privileged to live in Renfrew county in Eganville. Although I never met Mr. Quilty, I feel, in researching his life and in talking to his friends and family, that I've come to know him, and I hope to share some of that with you today.

On a funny anecdote, if I may, I was on the phone with the editor of the Eganville Leader, Gerald Tracey, the other day. We were deep in conversation about Mr. Quilty and he says, "Oh, Eleanor, there's a phone call for me. It's the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on the other line." I said, "Well, you tell him it's the member from Burlington calling, and I'm asking about Mr. Quilty." It seems that we were all looking to think about your dad and your grandfather; it's a very important occasion.

First elected in a by-election in 1962, Liberal candidate Len defeated PC candidate Con Mulvihill in an incredibly tight race. At first it seemed Mr. Mulvihill had won the election by a mere 25 votes, but after 1 a.m., it was Mr. Quilty who was declared the victor by, as the member for St. Catharines said, a landslide victory of 135 votes.

Prior to entering public life, Leonard was a wonderful public servant in his community. He was involved in the Kiwanis club, the Knights of Columbus and the Renfrew county school board, to name a few, and he was an engaged member of the Liberal Party throughout his life, "always on the sidelines," said his son Mike, and very much involved in the party.

Mike also told me that his dad was so respected by people throughout the county that the phone would often

ring and Leonard would answer. On the other end would be someone needing assistance and Leonard would listen patiently, ending the call with, "Leave it with me," committing to help in any way that he could. Said Mike: "He was very community-minded, and people counted on him to get things done."

Tough battles like his first election were nothing new to Leonard. After all, he was the only man to have reduced the majority of a Frost Conservative cabinet minister in the previous Ontario election in 1959. While Leonard may not have been a member of provincial Parliament for long, he certainly made good use of his time here in this House. He was a member of six standing committees, including the committees on travel and publicity, education, agriculture, and highways and highway safety.

A farmer by profession—as the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has noted, in a very difficult landscape—he was a big champion of farmers as a consequence, and rural Ontario as a whole.

During a debate concerning margarine one afternoon—and in the early 1960s this was a debate that members may remember was raging across Canada—Leonard stood here in the House and he said, "This afternoon we have heard a great deal in favour of margarine and the colouring of margarine. As a representative of rural people and a representative of an area where there is a great deal of butter producers, I want to tell the House, through you, sir, that the rural representatives are not taking this lying down. If this bill is introduced, we will have plenty to say."

While not afraid to speak his mind, Leonard had a calm method of presentation that had the effect of cooling the temperature during heated debate. His son Mike, a retired OPP superintendent, who, as has been noted, couldn't be with us today, said, "He believed that when you did a job, do it right the first time so you wouldn't have to go back and waste time doing so."

Leonard tackled his challenges head-on and it is clear by his legacy that he never looked back. Even with his get-things-done attitude, Leonard was always willing to work collaboratively, telling his colleagues during his maiden speech that, "I also wish to tell other members of the House that even though I sit in the opposition, it is my intention and the intention of my party to assist rather than resist government," an important ethos that resonates today.

After leaving Queen's Park in 1963, losing in the general election to Paul Yakabuski, the father of the current member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, he remained connected to provincial politics for the rest of his career. He sought re-election in the three following general elections—1967, 1971 and 1975—but unfortunately was unsuccessful in those contests. Len then turned his attention to local politics, becoming the reeve of Admaston township in 1977 and the warden of Renfrew county in 1981.

We lost Leonard on May 14, 2014, at the ripe old age of 94. His legacy of public service remains with us and indeed resonates in his son Mike, who is now councillor

for the township of Admaston/Bromley. Leonard was a man much loved by his family: his wife Irene, his sons Michael and Patrick, his eight grandchildren and his 12 great-grandchildren. He leaves behind a legacy in Renfrew county that will be remembered by everyone. When I asked Mike about his lasting memory of his dad, he said simply: "He was one of the most kind and caring men I ever knew."

To his family, we offer our condolences and our thanks for lending us your husband, your father, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, your brother and your uncle. We join the people of Renfrew county in acknowledging and celebrating his life of serving his community and his province. I thank you for the privilege of allowing me to honour him today, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to thank all members for their kind, heartfelt and thoughtful comments in paying tribute to Leonard Quilty. To the family, we thank you for the gift of Leonard, and we also would like to let you know that we will be sending you a copy of Hansard and a DVD so that you can see the affection in which former members are held by this Legislature. Thank you very much for being here.

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ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. I'd like to run down some of the headlines from yesterday. From the CBC: "Liberals Stonewalling Ontario's Fiscal Watchdog." From the Toronto Star: "Budget Watchdog Says ... Liberals Hiding Data from Him." The Canadian Press: "FAO Says ... Liberals Block His Access to Info."

We all know the Liberals don't know how to even spell the words "open government," but you would think they'd actually be able to practise it.

A simple question for the Premier: What are the Liberals hiding from the Financial Accountability Officer?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker. We appreciate the independent and valuable analysis that the FAO does of the state of the province's finances. Ministries continue to meet with the Financial Accountability Officer and his team to share information and answer questions, and we expect ministries to work closely with the Financial Accountability Officer, as is enshrined in the legislation.

Government officials have recently reached out to follow up on some of the issues that the FAO outlined in his press conference yesterday. As the Minister of Finance said yesterday, there is another government-wide directive going across government to make sure that offices within the ministries are responding to the FAO in a consistent and timely manner.

I would just remind the members opposite that we are working within legislation that was drafted and that we worked on with the opposition.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: The government likes to insist that they're open and transparent, but the FAO wouldn't have had to have a press conference to plead for openness and transparency if that was the case. Let me quote the FAO. Stephen LeClair said yesterday, "From day one" the Liberals have "claimed cabinet confidences on almost any future projection."

There is clearly political interference, and ministries are being directed by the corner office to obstruct and block the FAO. LeClair added, "I believe that this is political direction." Based on the Globe and Mail article, we already know the Premier feels that she needs to run all the ministries and pick up their slack.

So my question for the Premier is, will she instruct all the Liberal ministers to be transparent and open, just like you promised?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Just to be clear, requests for information from the Financial Accountability Officer are responded to by non-partisan officials. I know the members opposite don't want to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. I tried to see if you were going to do this on your own, and I think I'll have to help. If it continues, I'll go straight to naming—not naming; sorry—I'll go straight to warnings and then naming. Keep it down.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It is not the politicians who respond to the requests from the Financial Accountability Officer. It is the officials, who are non-partisan.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nipissing and the member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Finance, come to order.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Given that it is non-partisan officials who respond to the Financial Accountability Officer, I go back to the statement of the Minister of Finance yesterday that there is a directive going across government to ensure that all of those officials understand that we are operating within legislation.

That was put together as a result of a conversation with the opposition parties, in a minority Parliament, and it's consistent with the parameters of the Parliamentary Budget Officer in the federal government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: That's clearly not what the FAO said. The FAO said it's political direction that is causing this blocking.

The Minister of Finance has said that the Liberals "will be sending a government-wide directive to all offices to ensure that offices are responding to the FAO in a consistent and timely manner."

But if you do a Google translation, changing English into Liberal talking points, what comes up is that the

government is instructing all ministers to invoke cabinet confidentiality and block the FAO's access as quickly as possible. This isn't acceptable. You say one thing and the reality of your actions are completely different.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier stop hiding behind cabinet confidentiality? If you're not transparent and open, Madam Premier, one of your disgruntled cabinet ministers is going to leak it anyway. Just do the right thing: Be transparent; be open.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You can get yourself in trouble even when I ask you to sit. And I would direct my recommendations to speak to the Chair, please.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The province of Ontario is the first and only province in Canada that has instituted a Financial Accountability Officer. It's been modelled after the parliamentary budget officer, which the member opposite knows all too well. He's making accusations that aren't what Ontario is doing. We have acted in accordance with the legislation that has been passed. It may very well be that in Ottawa—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Dufferin—Caledon, come to order. The member from Leeds—Grenville, second time.

Finish, please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: It may well be that in Ottawa, that's how this member operated with his counterparts in regard to the accountability office, but it's not what we do in Ontario.

We want to work collaboratively with the Financial Accountability Officer for the benefit of openness and being more transparent in regard to the work that we do. That's exactly what is happening. We heard what the Financial Accountability Officer had to say. We are working with him to ensure that he gets the information necessary.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: Since the government doesn't want to talk about their culture of secrecy and obstruction, let's talk about something else. Let's talk about the disgruntled cabinet minister who leaked the Globe and Mail a copy of the climate change action plan.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: That was Bob Machiavelli.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Action number 13 of the leaked cabinet—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not going to accept that. If it happens again, the member will be warned.

Carry on.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Action number 13 of the leaked cabinet document said, "Set targets for updating the building code so that new homes and small buildings

built in 2030 are not relying on fossil fuels for their heating and cooling. Expand this requirement to all buildings before 2050."

Mr. Speaker, will the government be taking this action? Will they be amending the building code to limit natural gas? And if they're not taking this action, are they stating here in the Legislature that the document that was leaked to the Globe and Mail entitled "cabinet confidentiality" is actually a falsified document?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I will say to the member opposite—and I made it clear when I was in Alberta—that we are not banning natural gas. We're not doing those things that the member opposite wants to stir up issues around because he doesn't want to talk about climate change. As I said yesterday, like his former colleague in Alberta in the Wildrose Party, he does not want to talk about climate change. He does not want to talk about the reality that we have to tackle this threat to humanity, this threat to the globe. And we have to do it in a responsible way, which is why we will be bringing out the climate action plan.

Of course, there are working documents that the government uses in the run-up to the release of a plan, and we'll be talking more fully about the plan in coming days.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier—and I would note that there was no answer on whether that document was accurate. There was no answer on whether that document was falsified. Frankly, if I'm going to believe the Premier or the Globe and Mail, well, the Globe and Mail has got a much better track record. In terms of the Hydro One fire sale, it was the Globe and Mail that exposed it. The Minister of Education's secret payouts? It was the Globe and Mail that exposed it. And, once again, on the cap-and-trade plan, it was the Globe and Mail that exposed it.

The Liberals say they're not going to ban natural gas, but they can't refute the story in the Globe and Mail. The Liberals claim they're going to expand natural gas, yet they actually haven't provided a single dollar for that expansion. If the Premier was truly committed to natural gas in Ontario, she'd be spending money to expand it, not simply saying that it might happen sometime in the future.

Mr. Speaker, when will the Premier actually spend a single dollar to expand natural gas in the province—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier.

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Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We've been clear that expanding the use of natural gas—and, in fact, I used that

as the example of and the evidence that we're not interested in banning natural gas, Mr. Speaker. There's \$230 million in the budget to expand access to natural gas in our northern and rural communities. The Leader of the Opposition knows that perfectly well. He also should know that the agricultural community came forward with that specific ask and made it clear that that was something that needed to happen. We've responded to that. That process is under way, and that expansion will happen.

But I think, fundamentally, people need to understand that the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about process and he wants to talk about distractions because he does not want to talk about or support any change that would lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. He doesn't believe in climate change action and he's not supportive of the actions—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: The people and businesses of Ontario don't deserve to be strung along. Environmental Defence wrote to the Ontario Energy Board asking for the natural gas expansion to be halted because they know that's exactly where the Liberals are headed.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Finance, second time.

Mr. Patrick Brown: With so much uncertainty, no company would pay millions of dollars to expand natural gas, only to be told they are no longer going to have customers.

Once again, I'm going to go back to the same question I've asked three times to the Premier: Was that document labelled "Cabinet Confidential" accurate, or is that a falsified document? We would like an answer.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

The member from Renfrew, come to order. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, come to order. I'll pick you off one at a time. Minister of the Environment, come to order. And now I'm moving to warnings. Thank you.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Despite what the opposition says, we're not forcing anyone off natural gas. We announced in 2015 \$230 million to expand natural gas for northern and rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a laughing matter. The reality is that climate change is affecting the globe. Climate change is affecting every part of the globe. We have a responsibility to put in place a responsible plan. When that plan is finalized and it comes into the public realm after it has been through cabinet, I look forward to the opposition having a reasonable conversation with us, because this is something that will affect all of us, and it will even more profoundly affect our children and our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren.

The opposition party is not interested in taking action on this front. We are. We are moving forward responsibly. We are going to invest in innovation; we are going to develop technology that will be good and used here in Ontario and around the globe. We think they should be working with us on that.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. Right here, right now, in Ontario, we have hospitals that face the risk of imminent breakdown, but the Liberal government won't release which hospitals need that work. The Premier seems more concerned about avoiding bad PR than she is with giving Ontarians the confidence that their hospitals are being properly maintained. Speaker, this is just one more sign of a health care system in crisis. Nurses are being laid off, beds are being closed, and the Minister of Health seems to be making things up as he goes along.

When will the Premier finally look at the facts and admit there is a silent crisis in health care and it's patients who are paying the price?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It is very important that we address the deferred maintenance issues in hospitals across the province, but we have to do that in a responsible way. On top of building new hospitals—the \$12 billion that is in place to build new and renovate hospitals, the \$100 million a year for deferred maintenance: All of that goes to address the challenges that hospitals face in terms of maintenance.

That is the reality of having a large set of assets that have to be maintained on a regular basis. Whether it's schools or whether it's hospitals, there needs to be money that is used on a regular basis to address those challenges. That's the reason we actually increased the amount of money available to hospitals to tackle that deferred maintenance.

We're doing that in a responsible way, and I know that we're working closely with the hospitals in order to make those repairs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The health minister says that he won't tell Ontarians what hospitals need maintenance work because "It would give contractors an unfair advantage" if they knew "in advance of their bid what the ministry or the hospital had estimated the cost...." But that's not what the ministry told us. The ministry told us, "Concerns are that contractors currently engaged by hospitals would lose confidence in the facility's ability or intention to pay on current contractual obligations."

Either the minister isn't accurate or the ministry is not accurate. Is the Premier okay with her minister making things up as he goes?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, imagine if you were renovating your house. Would you tell the contractor the amount of money that you're going to be paying them or

would you actually ask the contractor to assess it and negotiate with that contractor?

This is precisely the same issue. Why would we identify hospitals and the amount of money that we believe is required to renovate or maintain? We would actually create a transparent, appropriate bidding process where contractors would bid on the repairs. It's no different than what you would do for your own house—let alone the fact that when we look at deferred maintenance, what we're talking about is what would be required to restore those hospital facilities to their brand new status. In fact, almost all of the hospitals—because they do this on a go-forward basis, it may be that at some time in the future they need to replace a generator. It may be that they have to replace a building that suits a different need. These are the sort of things we're looking at.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: The data that we have is about health and safety. It is about code compliance. It is about imminent breakdowns. Yet, although we have the amounts, we have no idea which hospitals we're talking about.

The government's own data shows that hospitals are overcrowded, the government's own data shows that hospitals are in desperate need of repairs—\$3.2 billion worth of repairs—and the government's own budget shows that hospital funding is not keeping up with inflation and is not keeping up with the growing population.

Yesterday, the Ontario Health Coalition reported that 94,000 people took the time to call on the Liberal government to stop cutting hospital care. When will the Premier listen to Ontarians and stop the cuts to our hospitals?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We are doing precisely what they're asking. We are increasing funding to our hospitals—\$345 million this year. The third party voted against our budget, which had that allocation. They voted against our budget that allocated \$1 billion more to the health care budget—\$52 billion that we invest. They voted against a provision in the budget that doubles the amount that we allocate to deferred maintenance, from \$50 million a year to \$100 million a year.

If this was such an important issue to them, if it wasn't just some political, partisan spin that they're trying to use here, why didn't they support it in the budget when it doubled the amount of funding that would have gone to deferred maintenance?

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. Saying that the sell-off of Hydro One will build transit isn't true, and anyone who says so is more interested in political spin than facts.

Will the Premier stop the sell-off of Hydro One?

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Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We've been very clear that building infrastructure—including transit—transportation infrastructure around the province is a priority. It's

a cornerstone of our economic plan. That building is happening, and part of that, which we ran on, was looking at the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario and leveraging those assets to invest in new assets. That's what we're doing with Hydro One. Those investments are going to benefit people across the province, including the people in the riding that the member represents.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, yesterday was Hydro One's first private annual general meeting. The sell-off of Hydro One slashes provincial revenue. It will cause the deficit to skyrocket. It will mean hydro rates will go up. When the Liberals try and suggest otherwise, they're insulting the intelligence of everyone in this province.

Will the Premier stop the sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I honestly think what insults the intelligence of people in this province is a party that suggests that they can do everything—including building transportation infrastructure—with no way to fund it, Mr. Speaker—absolutely no plan, absolutely no indication of how they would fund any of the things that they suggest; no understanding of how business works, as the questions around the hospitals indicate; no understanding of what it costs to build transit and transportation infrastructure in every corner of this province. That insults the intelligence of people in this province. What we've brought forward is a realistic plan that actually gets shovels in the ground, rail on the roads, and expands transportation across this province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, selling Hydro One is about one thing and one thing only: It's about the Premier getting a one-time cheque from shareholders so the books will look good in the next provincial election. That's what it's about. It's bad energy policy; it's bad environmental policy; it's bad economic policy. And everybody knows it.

Speaker, will the government admit that they have made a mistake? Will they recognize that they've made a mess of the energy system in this province and will they stop the sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Minister, just two or three: yes, yes and yes—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The reminder you're going to get is not going to be helpful. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I said "Minister of Finance."

Hon. Charles Sousa: It's all about creating greater value for the people of Ontario. The members opposite have failed to recognize that by enhancing the value of this corporation—which is now more valuable than it was before—we still retain, at this point, 70% ownership of

that company. We've made a commitment that we will always be the largest shareholder—

Mr. Paul Miller: We don't own it. We don't own it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: We will always be the largest shareholder. We will not allow any other person or company to have more than 10%. The issue of forgone revenue that the member speaks of is the fact that we are reinvesting it in other projects, in other assets, to gain even greater value. Furthermore, the company is now going to produce even more value and greater dividends for the province, even with the lower ownership.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Ontario continue to own this corporation, and the people of Ontario will benefit as we proceed forward.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Premier. Last week I hosted a town hall on natural gas with over 150 residents in attendance. They want answers. Municipalities have stated that they will mobilize against this radical agenda if the government wants to go ahead with its leaked plan.

In my riding of Chatham–Kent Essex and across the province, thousands of jobs depend on the natural gas industry. They need and deserve certainty. So Speaker, is the Premier amending the building code to phase out natural gas?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We've repeated often in this House that we have, in the 2016 budget, \$230 million to invest in expanding natural gas to rural communities. We also have seen changes in the Ontario Energy Board regulatory framework that make it easier to expand natural gas. Union Gas, at the present time, has five applications before the Ontario Energy Board to expand natural gas—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron–Bruce is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: They have five applications before the Ontario Energy Board. They're working with over a dozen other rural municipalities to expand natural gas into rural communities.

They just don't want to admit that we are investing in rural communities like they never even thought of.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Back to the Premier: Speaker, the Premier's refusal to answer basic questions is a betrayal of the people she once swore to serve. As a matter of fact, the people of Ontario worry about how their Premier is spending billions of their dollars to travel the world to build her own climate change legacy.

Here's what the president of the Canadian Gas Association, Timothy Egan, said with regard to the Premier's agenda: It is "incredibly irresponsible." It will destroy a

proud industry, kill countless jobs, ruin families and drive heating costs through the roof.

Our offices get numerous calls each day about natural gas. People have been scared for weeks because this government is too scared to release the real details. MPPs can't do their jobs and provide answers.

Speaker, why does Premier Wynne continue to turn her back on rural Ontario and ignore their questions? Are you or are you not amending the building codes?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Once again, the opposition doesn't want to accept the realities. The reality that they're accepting is a draft document that was leaked to the media. They accept it as fact. So in the coming weeks, there will be a fulsome climate change action plan in place, and then they can respond. Then we can have the conversation.

We have probably done more consultation with the gas sector than with any other sector, as we lead up to this, over the last year and a half to two years. They have an open door—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings is warned.

Wrap up, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We're expanding natural gas, particularly into rural communities. That's a reality they don't want to accept, and it upsets them to see—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Premier. New Democrats support a strong public pension plan. We believe that all Ontarians should be able to retire with dignity. This government, however, has taken it upon itself to exclude thousands, if not millions, of Ontarians and their families.

This month, the provinces are set to discuss a potential increase to the Canada Pension Plan, a plan that leaves no Canadian behind. Even the federal government has expressed concerns that the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, which currently leaves out thousands of workers, may prevent a future CPP enhancement.

Premier, will the government support a universal enhancement to the Canada Pension Plan so that every Canadian can benefit?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Associate Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the member opposite for her question. I know that she has been the critic on this particular file.

The member opposite knows full well that Ontario has provided strong leadership when it comes to retirement security in this province. That leadership is something that is moving us forward as we look to implement the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

We have consulted very widely on this policy, and we've received input from all sides: from business, from—

Mr. Paul Miller: You got nothing from the retirees—nothing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is warned. I would have gotten the message long ago.

Minister.

1130

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: We are creating a secure retirement savings floor for the people of Ontario so that when they retire, they can retire with dignity.

Our Premier and our Minister of Finance in fact have led national conversations when it comes to the expansion of CPP, Mr. Speaker. We are currently at the table and we remain at the table as we build a stronger retirement system here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: During committee this week, New Democrats called, as always, for a universal Ontario pension plan, but the government voted down each and every one of our amendments. This Liberal government believes that only some workers in Ontario should be allowed to participate in the ORPP.

Canadians pride themselves on having a public health care system, a public education system and a public pension system that benefits us all. Speaker, it's part of who we are as Canadians.

Now, however, it looks like the Liberals' design of the Ontario pension plan may jeopardize a future CPP enhancement. Premier, does this government actually believe that it has the mandate to redesign the CPP?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Mr. Speaker, our government believes that after a lifetime of working, Ontarians deserve to retire with dignity and with security. That is what we're building. We are moving forward with the implementation of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

We are at the table as conversations are under way with the CPP expansion, and those discussions, we've always said, will take time. We're part of that conversation.

Mr. Speaker, what is important is that when people retire, they have a predictable stream of income in retirement. That is exactly what they will have with the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. It will bring financial security. It will ensure that when people retire, they can do so with dignity and that they have that lifetime income. That's to ensure that, in fact, when our young workers retire, they will have the retirement security that they don't have today.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. John Fraser: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. Today, June 1, marks the 33rd annual Injured Workers' Day. As the minister reminded us a few weeks ago in the House, despite our progress, too many people continue to lose their lives or suffer an

injury or an illness simply because they went to work. No job is worth a life. No job is worth an injury.

I know that every year, the Minister of Labour addresses injured workers and their representatives when they assemble here. Mr. Speaker, can the minister please share with us what we're doing to improve the lives of injured workers and treating them with the respect and dignity they deserve?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thanks to the honourable member for that excellent question. I want to also take this opportunity to thank all the groups that have come down to visit us here, as they do on an annual basis, at Queen's Park.

Speaker, on this issue, prevention is key. But when that prevention simply isn't working and injuries occur and fatalities occur, those who are injured need to know that they're going to be treated with dignity and they're going to be treated with respect.

We should be proud in the province of Ontario. We've come a long way. The province's annual rate of workplace injuries has dropped by more than 40% in the past decade. We should be proud of that, but we shouldn't be satisfied for one minute with that. There's a long way to go. We shouldn't rest as long as one person is injured on the job. I'm proud of the government's record in this regard, but not satisfied. There's a long way to go. We've got a number of plans in place. I look forward to meeting the injured workers today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to thank the minister for that response. I was pleased to join him earlier this year when we opened an office to assist injured workers in Ottawa.

We all know that many workplace incidents can be prevented. Workplace injuries should never just be seen as a cost of doing business. It's important that Ontario has a workplace culture that protects workers and prevents injuries from happening in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, what steps are we taking to ensure that our loved ones and friends return home safe after a day at work?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, once again, to the member for that excellent question. We're working very hard at the ministry with partners right around this province to keep the injury numbers down and to eliminate deaths. We've almost doubled the number of workplace inspectors in the province of Ontario to look at health and safety. We've increased the amount of health and safety training that is now mandatory in the province of Ontario. Every single worker in this province must take basic health and safety training before they enter the workforce.

We've got mandatory specialized training for those people who work at heights. Speaker, since last April, 100,000 Ontarians have taken that training of working at heights.

Workers who are new to the job, including young workers—this is so important, Speaker. Young workers are three times more likely to be hurt on the job than

older workers. We need to concentrate on that. At the Ministry of Labour, we're doing exactly that.

I'd ask all members to spread that message through their own constituency offices about the importance of health and safety.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My question is for the environment minister. Speaker, I'm sure you have seen the news that California and Quebec's recent cap-and-trade auction flopped. In fact, only 11% of the allowances were actually sold. Now California is scrambling to make up for this funding shortfall.

Still, the environment minister actually told TVO yesterday that he isn't worried about similar problems in Ontario, even though the government has promised to spend \$1.2 billion in cap-and-trade funds on a lottery list of Liberal pet projects without even raising a dime. The Liberals are spending money they don't have.

How will the government cover the tab for the Liberals' billion-dollar spending spree if Ontario's first cap-and-trade auction crashes, just like California and Quebec's did?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport is warned.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: You don't want to take action.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You want to gamble?

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: No, it's the Minister of the Environment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sorry. Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

This is a market system. There are periods—we've had over a dozen auctions now where they were over-subscribed. The last one was 95%. This was lower. At different points in the compliance period, there will be greater or lesser demand. We are early and far away from the end of the next compliance period. We expect fluctuations, Mr. Speaker.

It is a market mechanism, it is not a politicized system, and it works on supply and demand, which, the last time I looked, was a fairly consistent principle with Conservatives, who like markets and like the market to solve problems. So we're using a market mechanism that is working all around the world. Within the next 12 months, over half the world's economy will be covered by a carbon-pricing system, the vast majority of it the cap-and-trade system that we're talking about: Japan, China, Germany, Britain, California.

It's a market. It will go up and down. We have confidence in markets—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Back to the minister: The truth is that the minister is planning on funding shortfalls, and he said so. He actually told TVO yesterday, "We know in the earlier years, until the market is mature, you'll see more dramatic swings."

I find it unbelievable that the Liberals are willing to write billion-dollar cheques without knowing how much money they'll have in the bank. With no contingency plan in place, the Liberals will once again leave Ontarians with either more debt or more taxes.

So I ask the minister to be clear with the people of Ontario today. Are the Liberals going to plunge Ontario deeper into debt or raise taxes to cover the funding shortfall after their first cap-and-trade auction crashes?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, if you needed more proof that all of this money was going to reduce greenhouse gas and for environmental programs, here is your proof: The money is dedicated to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is a market system. Money comes in transparently, based on how much comes in at each auction. It goes out. It will be independently reviewed, and it is spent transparently on greenhouse gas emissions. In the years that the market generates more revenue, there will be more revenue spent. This is the difference.

This money is going to programs that the cement industry wants, that homeowners want. It's going to lower heating costs. It's going to help people buy low-carbon vehicles. It's going to make major investments in our auto sector to modernize and continue to support a dynamic auto sector. Liberals have the money to invest in the auto sector. Tories consistently vote against the auto sector—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I stand, you sit. New question.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Good morning.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Today, we're joined by hundreds of individuals and families who have suffered an injury or illness at work and who have felt let down by the Liberal government's mismanagement of our province's workers' compensation system.

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The WSIB is supposed to protect our province's most vulnerable. Instead, over the past six years, the Liberal government has been too concerned with bringing down WSIB's \$12-million debt, and doing so at the cost of those who depend on their benefits to make ends meet. When will this Liberal government stop retiring the WSIB's unfunded liability on the backs of injured workers and their families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for this very important question and for the courtesy he extended me prior to this question.

Speaker, all injured workers deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. When those injuries occur—we wish they didn't occur, and we do everything we possibly can to make sure they don't—when they do occur, people should expect to be treated, as I said, with dignity and respect.

We've been working with the WSIB in a very progressive way. Earlier this year, we passed legislation that established the indexation of WSIB benefits to full CPI. We're going to index benefits that, oddly enough, were taken away 19 years ago by the very member's same party. We have reinstated them.

We've listened to the concerns. Part of that respect, part of that dignity, is to make sure we understand the concerns of injured workers. That's why today is so important. What we've done in Bill 109 is focus very clearly and precisely on the rights of injured workers in this province. Speaker, we'll continue to do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: If life was as good as the minister makes it sound, we wouldn't have hundreds of people on the lawn today saying that this is not the case.

The truth is, under the Liberal government's watch, those who suffer an injury at work and go to the WSIB for help get attacked on all fronts, including reduced claims, premature return to work, ignoring the advice of medical professionals, and that list goes on and on.

Anwar Pierre, who is at the rally at Queen's Park today, is a father with a torn rotator cuff from a picking job received through a temp agency. He's unable to work and he struggles to make ends meet because the WSIB has disagreed with his doctor.

Speaker, I'll ask again: When will this government stop retiring WSIB's debts on the backs of Anwar and our province's most vulnerable workers?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you once again to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. He raises a very important question. That's precisely why this House passed Bill 109: simply to focus on improving protections for workers in this province. We changed the way that we calculate survivor benefits. We've made it an offence now for employers to prevent workers from reporting workplace injuries and illnesses. We've increased the maximum corporate penalty from \$100,000 to \$500,000. We've put in a Fair Practices Commissioner to investigate when people have an issue with the WSIB. They have an ombud to go to, Speaker.

It's that simple: You listen to injured workers; you act on their concerns; you make the system work for them. That's exactly what we're doing. I'll be proud today to stand before those hundreds of injured workers and talk

about the track record of this government. It's second to none. This government respects injured workers. This government will ensure that there are practices in place to make sure they get the respect and the dignity that they receive when they need services from the WSIB.

WASTE DIVERSION

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Diverting waste from landfill is an incredibly important issue that many generations of government, many governments past, have grappled with. Quite frankly, we just produce far too much waste, and we don't recycle enough.

Prior to my assuming my role here as the member for Beaches–East York, I worked closely with the recycling industry to expand the materials in the blue box to include box board, wrapping paper and used books. I also worked with a team of people in the beverage and alcohol industry in order to bring the deposit system to liquor bottles in Ontario, thus taking material out of the blue box.

The problem is—it becomes very problematic: Who gets to pay for what's in the blue box? That's why we brought in Bill 151. I know that during the course of our hearings—five days and clause-by-clause—we heard numerous submissions from people across the province about how to improve Bill 151. So I'd like to ask the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change if he could explain to this House the improvements we made to the bill to serve Ontario better.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I just want to give a shout-out to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who I heard earlier speaking in the memorial. He did a lovely job.

That spirit of non-partisanship, when we get it in the House, is a good thing, and this bill is an example of that, Mr. Speaker. Members from all three parties worked very hard on this together. I want to give credit to the member for Huron–Bruce, the member for Toronto–Danforth and many other members here on both sides of the House.

This is an excellent bill. The work we did with AMO will relieve about \$117 million in municipal costs. The work we did with Unilever—I want to thank John Coyne, and Bob Chant of Loblaws—will actually make this much more efficient and more cost-effective for business, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change for his excellent work on this file. It has been extremely important that we are listening to parties and representatives on all sides of the House to bring together the best bill we can for waste diversion in Ontario, so this input has been very critical.

I'd also like to give a shout-out to the member for Mississauga–Brampton South, who shepherded the bill through committee and who was extremely important in drawing out some of the commentary in order to ensure that we got all the nuanced stuff right, in order to make this bill as good as possible.

The bill is intended to improve resource efficiency and have the right people in the right place pay for and do the work. That's why we know that recovering just 60% of the waste materials could generate upwards of 13,000 jobs and contribute over \$1.5 billion to gross domestic product in Ontario.

Will the minister speak to how this bill can affect the people in the province on a daily basis and help us improve our diversion rates from landfill?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank the member for his support. I also want to thank the member for Mississauga-Brampton South, who did an excellent job—she's got a sharp mind for this—and the member for Sudbury, who stole all my bow ties, Mr. Speaker.

This is a remarkable piece of economic work. I want to thank the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. This is going to help us improve productivity. For example, we collect enough aluminum in Ontario and Quebec to run an aluminum smelter entirely on recovered materials. That means it would only use 5% of the energy it does for virgin materials. Three of our steel mills work entirely on recovered materials. These are huge productivity gains that reduce structural costs in the Ontario economy.

The synergies of this all-in government approach of not seeing the environment as hostile to the economy but seeing one contributing positively to the other—I want to thank the Premier and my colleagues for taking this all-in, holistic approach, integrating economic and environmental policy. I want to thank the opposition parties for working so closely with us and providing the leadership.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Premier. It happened earlier this year for fans of Adele, and even prior to that for fans of Springsteen. This week it happened again, as there was a huge outcry from music fans—it has been deafening, actually—of the Tragically Hip who went online to buy tickets, and those tickets were snatched up in just seconds after they went on sale.

What those fans probably didn't know, however, was that last July, this government changed the ticket resale laws to make it easier for big ticket sellers to gouge customers. For years, these corporate giants have been going to legislatures around the world, trying to change scalping laws so that they can turn the screws on consumers. Last summer, you eliminated the last protection for consumers that there was.

Speaker, what possible reason could the government have for abandoning music fans and concertgoers here in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Attorney General.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, I feel sorry for those fans of the Tragically Hip who wanted to go to a concert and have to pay these prices.

In 2010, Ontario amended the Ticket Speculation Act to add additional protections to consumers from unfair ticket reselling practices. The amendment prohibited

related primary ticket sellers and secondary ticket sellers, including brokers and agents, from selling tickets to the same events. The amendment was aimed at ensuring that those who profit from the sale of tickets on the primary market may not also profit from their resale on the secondary market.

We did that. It's a complicated explanation of how to prevent this from happening. But it seems like the technology is always ahead. I said we're going to do what we can—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

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Mr. Todd Smith: So it's okay, then, to rip off consumers if it's online but not face to face, according to this government. Late-breaking story on the CBC, Mr. Speaker: For 91 years it's been illegal in Ontario to sell tickets above face value, until last summer.

At that time, when the government changed the law, John Karastamatis of Mirvish Productions said this change catered to big ticketholders like Ticketmaster, StubHub and MLSE: "That's what this new law was all about—to allow these corporations to be able to legally use the same techniques that the so-called street scalpers use."

If Ontario music fans want to know what really happened, I've got 52,700 reasons why this happened. That's how much Ticketmaster and its parent company have donated to the Ontario Liberals in the last two years.

Speaker, why did Ticketmaster end up like the Leafs winning the cup in 1962, and Ontario gets the shaft?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: To the Minister of Consumer Services.

Hon. David Orazietti: Thank you, Speaker—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The amount of time that's left doesn't bother me at all. Anyone else that wants to speak out—

Mr. John Yakabuski: They won it.

Mr. Mike Colle: In 1967.

Mr. John Yakabuski: And 1962, Mike.

Mr. Mike Colle: It was 1967.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All right. The member from Eglinton-Lawrence is warned and the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke is warned. Anyone else? I'm getting close to being able to name some, and I'm not going to stop.

Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. David Orazietti: Thank you, Speaker. I want to clarify a couple of things here that the member has raised with respect to this issue. There was a regulation change on July 1, 2015. One of the fundamental issues that was at the heart of this was the fraud that was taking place with systems that were not able to be verified and people getting tickets that were—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. The member from Leeds-Grenville is warned. I'm going to pass the test.

Carry on.

Hon. David Oraziatti: Thank you, Speaker. What was done was the important change that was made that allows companies to resell those tickets on the original site with guarantees.

The government does not set ticket prices for the public. That's determined by the marketplace as, most would agree, and what people will pay for them. Our concern around protecting consumers is with respect to the fraud that was taking place and the validity of the tickets, to ensure that an individual actually purchased an authentic ticket.

MERCURY POISONING

Ms. Sarah Campbell: To the Premier: "In the spirit of reconciliation, the Ontario government should do the right thing" and clean up the Wabigoon River system and Clay Lake. That wasn't the NDP that said this, even though we've repeatedly raised the issue of the legacy of mercury contamination of the Grassy Narrows First Nation territory with this government; that was Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day.

"No single act would go further to illustrate that a new era has dawned in our relationship with indigenous peoples and our shared environment," said Dr. David Suzuki.

"Efforts to remediate the mercury have been postponed long enough." That's the Liberal MP for Dryden, the former Indian affairs federal minister, Bob Nault.

Speaker, when will this government do what everyone knows needs to be done and clean up the Wabigoon River so that the people of Grassy Narrows may fish and live off their land without becoming sick?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. David Zimmer: As you know, this report was released the other day. It is with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. My office received a copy yesterday. My office is reviewing the report, as is the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. The report suggests new science. This government is always, always interested in the best science available, the newest science available. We will consider the scientific suggestions and the recommendations in the report after our experts have had a chance to review the report and will comment later on it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Two days ago—the same day the Premier apologized for the province's role in the legacy of residential schools—the Premier said that she hadn't read the report that her government has had since April. And now we hear from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs that they've only received the report yesterday. This is ridiculous.

Yesterday, the Premier said that she had read the report, but she claimed that the solutions that were proposed in there weren't clear. So let me be clear, because the report is very clear: Determine whether there is an ongoing mercury leak; find out if there are hot spots that

carry contaminated mercury downriver; and inject clay into the river to enhance the natural remediation that's going on. It has been done effectively in other parts of the province, such as Sudbury, decades ago.

We know that it can be done, so Speaker, let me ask this: Why won't this Premier commit to cleaning up the Wabigoon River of its mercury contamination that's making the people in Grassy Narrows sick?

Hon. David Zimmer: Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Not only has the Premier read it; she's instructed me and the Minister of—indigenous relations?

Interjection: Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Aboriginal Affairs—soon to be something even more exciting.

The report is being reviewed right now. It's been read by myself and the Premier. We take it very seriously. It's not a simple report. It asks for determination of sources, which is complex. There are issues of sediment. There are issues around the fact that the Dryden plant doesn't use mercury anymore. There are still potentially other sources, and there's a complex set of issues in Clay Lake.

Chief Isadore Day and I meet every two weeks. We met yesterday. We had a lengthy discussion about that. He's proposing some ideas. He's working with Grassy Narrows First Nation. We will be moving very quickly on this, but everyone agrees on more research to determine which of the interventions suggested and which combinations are best. We're going to get to the bottom of it, and I'll work with you to ensure that we work together on that.

SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour la ministre associée de la Santé responsable des Soins de longue durée et de la Promotion du mieux-être, L'honorable Dipika Damerla.

Speaker, as you may know, yesterday was World No Tobacco Day, an important milestone across the globe and an opportunity for us to consider the impact of tobacco on Ontarians.

Doctors know that smoking is a universal evil, heightening the risk of heart attack, stroke, poor leg circulation, emphysema and multiple cancers. I'm grateful, in fact, that our government has made it a priority to educate Ontarians and to provide support for those looking to quit. For example, the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy has greatly reduced tobacco use and lowered health risks to non-smokers in Ontario. In addition, the government has made many contributions inspired by community organizations, public health units and outspoken individuals, who have worked tirelessly to promote a smoke-free culture.

Speaker, my question is this: Would the minister please update this House on the government's Smoke-Free Ontario initiative?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I want to thank the member from Etobicoke North, who I know as a physician is a great advocate for this issue. I want to thank him for all of his advocacy.

As we all know, 2016 marks the 10th anniversary of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. Through this act and through our work with various contributing organizations, our government has significantly reduced tobacco use in Ontario. As a result of this important work, smoking rates in Ontario decreased from 24.5% in 2000 to 17.4% in 2014, which represents 400,000 fewer smokers—that's 400,000 lives saved.

Our strategy focuses on prevention, protection and cessation. We've invested over \$336 million in this strategy since 2008. More importantly, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that in our recent budget we committed to a funding increase of \$5 million for smoking cessation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Minister, for your leadership on this file on the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy. I know that important work, of course, lies ahead in our efforts to make Ontario the jurisdiction with the lowest smoking rates in Canada.

The minister's focus on protection and enforcement, prevention and cessation all have important impacts on the lives of both non-smokers suffering second-hand smoke as well as smokers who are looking to quit.

Yesterday, the minister celebrated the 10th anniversary of Smoke-Free Ontario at an event that recognized the contributions of anti-tobacco champions across the province. While she spoke to the attendees about the need to refresh and update all three pillars of the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy, she also made important commitments to providing new cessation supports for Ontario's priority populations.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care please inform the House about the smoking cessation supports this government is providing for all Ontarians?

1200

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Once again, I thank the member from Etobicoke North for the question. I know, as a physician, he'll be delighted with some of the changes we are making as we move forward with a new cessation action plan.

This plan includes the establishment of an online cessation hub that is a centralized access point to help tobacco users navigate the system and to find local services and cessation aids tailored to their needs—this will be in place by the summer of 2017—and a centralized access point to help tobacco users find local services.

Starting by the next "quit" season, I am so pleased to announce that we will be providing one "quit line" phone number available to all Ontarians 24/7, which will offer coaching and counselling to help smokers quit. We'll have a number of cessation service networks of coordinated supports, and we look forward to enhancing these.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of Health: A year ago this Legislature enacted a private member's bill to create a provincial framework and an action plan concerning vector-borne and zoonotic diseases—diseases like Lyme. The law mandates the framework and the action plan within a year of when it was passed. Obviously, the year is now up.

Will the minister please outline to this House and to people affected by diseases like Lyme the required plan to take action?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We have a Lyme reference group that is comprised of stakeholders on this issue which is working towards issuing a strategy together with the provincial government. We are working on a broader strategy as well.

I appreciate getting a health question, because I feel compelled to address an issue that was raised by one of the member's colleagues earlier this week about the cancer care clinic in North Bay. I'm compelled to because this involves individuals and families who are suffering from cancer who have been shaken because of a rumour that was started by the member from Nipissing. The rumour began with him and was promulgated by him, and there was no truth to it. The president of North Bay hospital, as well as the head of the cancer clinic, had to come forward and publicly deny that there was absolutely—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Come to order, please. Come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): People are taking a risk. There are votes today.

Please finish. You have wrap-up.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, this is so important to the public interest. The member from Nipissing didn't bother to call the hospital, didn't bother to call the cancer clinic, didn't bother to talk to me. He promulgated a rumour which he knew was untrue and it's the crisis—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Mr. Todd Smith: He's out of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I know my job.

The member will withdraw.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Minister, I do ask you to come back to this issue of the deadline for action on Lyme.

I received an email from the mother of a Lyme victim: "The people of Ontario need to know that our health care is like living in a Third World country." Minister, people continue to go to the States for Lyme disease testing and for treatment. We want to know: What is Ontario now doing, as legislated, to help these people? What has been done with respect to testing? What has been done with respect to treatment, prevention, surveillance? What new approaches—we've had a year—do we now see with respect to education and research?

The tick season and the mosquito season is now upon us. Minister, I sincerely ask you: What has been put in place?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The issue of Lyme disease, and the broader strategy as well for dealing with similar zoonotic diseases that are prevalent in this province, is an issue that's extremely important to me as a public health doctor, and it's extremely important to the ministry. We're working hard. We have a reference group that is comprised of many stakeholders.

I want to commend, as well, the member for Algoma-Manitoulin. I'll be meeting with him next week, I believe, and a number of stakeholders specifically on the issue of Lyme disease. I want to commend him for his proactive work and advocacy on this issue. It's extremely important.

We have a reference group which is doing their hard work, working towards updating our provincial strategy. Mr. Speaker, I won't be satisfied until we have a strategy that reflects the best clinical guidelines and the best evidence and science available so that we can provide individuals who are at risk of or suffering from Lyme disease—whether that's acute or chronic—the best possible care in this province that they can get.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Windsor-Tecumseh on a point of order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: On a point of order: I stand to correct my record. Earlier today, I said that the unfunded liability at the WSIB was \$12 million. We know the unfunded liability, the unfunded debt load, at the WSIB is \$12 billion.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

The Minister of Finance on a point of order.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I beg your indulgence. This is not an introduction which I missed earlier today, and I appreciate the order that you provided yesterday.

I just wanted to congratulate today our page captain, Julia Michaud, who's doing a great job, and I just want—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sorry; that's not acceptable. Thank you.

The member from Haldimand-Norfolk on a point of order.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Speaker, I recognize it is after 12 o'clock. Could I ask for a special dispensation for a late show on a recent question?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Haldimand-Norfolk is correct that after the hour of noon, it needs a request for unanimous consent to issue a late show. Therefore, on behalf of the member from Haldimand-Norfolk, he's seeking unanimous consent to put forward a late show. Do we agree? I heard a no.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Earlier, when I was speaking to the issue of deferred maintenance in hospitals—this is a point of order, Mr. Speaker—I had erroneously indicated that the annual spending on deferred maintenance by my ministry is \$100 million. In fact, the annual spending on deferred maintenance from my ministry is \$175 million annually.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would also take this moment to simply say to you that I will be strict on what I told you yesterday. I do not want any tricks being played. We are not going to do this anymore. We're going to simply say that introductions are done during those two times in which you're allowed to introduce, and I'm staying firm with that, as are my deputy speakers.

DEFERRED VOTES

SUPPORTING ONTARIO'S TRAILS ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE SOUTIEN AUX SENTIERS DE L'ONTARIO

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act to enact the Ontario Trails Act, 2016 and to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 100, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur les sentiers de l'Ontario et modifiant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1208 to 1213.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On May 31, 2016, Mr. Coteau moved third reading of Bill 100. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Campbell, Sarah
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Dhillon, Vic

Gélinas, France
Gravelle, Michael
Gretzky, Lisa
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Jones, Sylvia
Kiwala, Sophie
Kwinter, Monte
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
MacLeod, Lisa
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Mantha, Michael
Martins, Cristiana
Martow, Gila

Moridi, Reza
Munro, Julia
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Natyshak, Taras
Oraziotti, David
Pettapiece, Randy
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Sergio, Mario
Smith, Todd
Sousa, Charles
Tabuns, Peter
Takhar, Harinder S.
Taylor, Monique
Thibeault, Glenn
Thompson, Lisa M.

Dickson, Joe
DiNovo, Cheri
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne

Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
McNaughton, Monte
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul

Vanthof, John
Vernile, Daiene
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakubski, John
Yurek, Jeff
Zimmer, David

Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John

Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine

Thibeault, Glenn
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

MacLaren, Jack

McDonnell, Jim

Nicholls, Rick

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 92; the nays are 3.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

WASTE-FREE ONTARIO ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO SANS DÉCHETS

Deferred vote on the motion that the question be now put on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016 and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur la récupération des ressources et l'économie circulaire et la Loi transitoire de 2016 sur le réacheminement des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1216 to 1217.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On May 17, 2016, Mrs. Mangat moved third reading of Bill 151, An Act to enact the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016 and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002.

Mr. Colle has moved that the question be now put.

All those in favour of Mr. Colle's motion please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven

Gravelle, Michael
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie
Kwinter, Monte
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina

Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Oraziotti, David
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Amott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Campbell, Sarah
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
DiNovo, Cheri
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France

Gretzky, Lisa
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Jones, Sylvia
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McDonnell, Jim
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Munro, Julia
Natyshak, Taras

Nicholls, Rick
Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Smith, Todd
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakubski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 53; the nays are 41.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Mrs. Mangat has moved third reading of Bill 151, An Act to enact the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016 and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, sorry. The member from Haldimand–Norfolk on a point of order.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Could I ask for unanimous consent for a late show on the Lyme disease question?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It being after noon, the member from Haldimand–Norfolk is seeking unanimous consent to have a late show. Do we agree? Agreed.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nipissing on a point of order.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I stand on a point of order. Yesterday during question period I spoke of a rumour in the city of North Bay. It turns out it's not a rumour; it was a fact.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not a point of order, and the member should know so.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1222 to 1500.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Haldimand–Norfolk has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care concerning Lyme disease.

This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

ANNUAL REPORT, FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I also beg to inform the House that today I've laid upon the table the 2015-16 annual report and executive summary from the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario.

ANNUAL REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Again, I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the 2015-16 annual report from the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Han Dong: Speaker, I recognize my former colleague, and your former colleague as well: Mr. Chris Yaccato is in the House. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. Also, my former employee.

The member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I take great pleasure in introducing to the House my new constituency assistant in Windsor: Corinne Allsop is here. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. Thank you for being here.

Introduction of guests? The member from Trinity–Spadina forgot somebody.

Mr. Han Dong: I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, it must be the pillar.

I recognize my other old colleague: Ferd Longo is in the House as well. Good afternoon, Ferd. Welcome to the Legislature.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of my constituents in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock on the issue of long-term care.

Just recently, I received 500 letters from Frost Manor about the crisis in our long-term-care system. There's underfunding for beds, understaffing in homes, and I am

frustrated that people are continuing to suffer. In June, we recognized the 32nd anniversary of Seniors' Month, and I am disappointed that our families have suffered 13 long years of inaction.

There are 24,000 seniors without access to a nursing bed. The wait-list will skyrocket to 50,000 in the next six years. In Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock alone, there's over 800 on the wait-list, and in the Peterborough area, there's over 2,700 on their wait-list. Thirty thousand beds have yet to be rebuilt to modern standards, and the government has yet to commit to funding the building of any new beds. I've been calling on the government to release the capacity study to rebuild outdated beds and nursing homes, add beds and eliminate the shamefully long wait-list.

The ongoing shortfalls are a direct result of this Liberal government's incompetence, squandering \$11.4 billion every year just to service the debt that they built. That money would represent enough to cover the cost of hiring extra nurses and personal support workers, providing an additional four hours of care and would address every person on the wait-list. In fact, it would be enough to fund our entire long-term-care system three times over.

The needs of our elderly patients and caregivers must become a priority for this government. The time for action is now.

MIKE ROHRER

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's my sad duty to report to you that we lost a member of Tecumseh town council last weekend. Councillor Mike Rohrer was just 45. He'd only been on council for a couple of years, but he had been a political activist, a community builder and a good friend for a long, long time.

I guess I first met Michael in 1995. He was 23. He was the Conservative candidate running against a Liberal by the name of Dwight Duncan. We all know who won that race. Another loss in 1999, despite doubling his votes—but you know what, Speaker? Mike was such a great guy, he had such an engaging and charismatic personality, that he and Dwight became good friends and remained so.

I used to bring Michael in as a Conservative or Canadian Alliance analyst on my political panel at CBC Windsor. As a reporter, I covered him in dozens of local stories. He was a commercial real estate appraiser.

When he was 28, he was the youngest-ever appointee to Ontario's Assessment Review Board. Opposition members roasted him because of his political connections, but connections were what Mike Rohrer was all about. No matter wherever he went, with whomever he met, he was always upbeat, always had a smile or a joke. He brightened your day. He really was larger than life. But at his core, Mike was a family man, and in those blended and extended families, Mike was the centre of the universe.

My condolences to Dee, daughters Hannah and Grace, and son, Michael. Kids, your dad was a very special person, and we're going to miss him, too.

ITALIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Laura Albanese: June is Italian Heritage Month in Ontario, a time to highlight the contributions of Italian Canadians to our society.

This is the sixth year that Italian Heritage Month activities will be carried out in Ontario. The festivities were kicked off last Sunday at the Italian National Day event at Casa Loma, renamed Castello Italia for the day, which the Premier, myself and many other MPPs attended, together with about 4,500 people.

Tomorrow, June 2, Italians around the world, including Ontario, will be celebrating the 70th anniversary of Italian Republic Day. On June 2 and 3, 1946, Italian citizens were called to vote in a referendum to choose which form of government their country should adopt. They chose the republic over monarchy. This was also the first occasion in which Italian women were allowed to vote in a national political election.

Mr. Speaker, for many years, we have been hosting an Italian flag-raising here at Queen's Park. This year, we will be celebrating on June 10.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the minister responsible for seniors, Mario Sergio, who, together with two members of the opposition parties, introduced the Italian Heritage Month Act in 2010. Through this act, the province of Ontario recognizes the important contributions Italian immigrants have made in building Ontario's communities and the economic, political, social and cultural achievements of Italian Canadians throughout our province.

Italian Heritage Month is an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about Ontario's rich history.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Todd Smith: I come from a region with a big heart, and never was that more evident than over the past couple of weeks.

When Canada has needed the people of the Quinte region, we've stepped up for Canada, and when the people of Fort McMurray needed us, we packed for Fort Mac. The people of my region have donated over \$130,000 to the people of Fort Mac since the wildfires started, but they also took it a step further. It was my honour to work with Max Haggarty of ITS transport, Joe Shunock, Furball's Choice and the Belleville and Prince Edward county fire departments to pack a big rig with supplies for the people who made it out of Fort McMurray but who are stuck in camps in northern Alberta, in towns like Redwater, Bonnyville, Wandering River and Slave Lake.

Not everybody made it to Edmonton or Calgary, and those who didn't were in desperate need of supplies. We made our goal to fill a big rig with 26 skids of food, baby supplies, toiletries, pet supplies and other essentials. We got 29. For two weeks, volunteers manned the old Electrolab warehouse in Belleville and received thou-

sands of items to send to the folks who lost everything in the fires.

I can't thank them all, but I'm going to try: Susan Smith; Carol and Dennis Hubble; Gord and Twila Adams; Lisa McLennan; Laurie Massicotte; Matt Helm, Ryan Turcotte and the guys at the Belleville fire department; Stephanie and Carlos from Furball's Choice, who got this whole effort started; and finally, the people who opened their wallets and reached into their pockets just a little deeper every time they visited a local grocery store.

And now that kindness is on its way out west. I was told this morning that that transport truck is headed west through Thunder Bay on its way to Alberta. We thank everybody for their efforts in Pack 4 Fort Mac.

INJURED WORKERS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today on behalf of the NDP caucus to recognize the hundreds of injured workers and their families and allies who have come from across the province to rally here at Queen's Park, just as they have done every June 1 for more than 30 years.

In particular, as MPP for London West, I want to acknowledge the London and District Injured Workers Group and give a special shout-out to friends I made last Friday who stopped in London during the second annual Justice for Injured Workers Ride. These four cyclists began their journey in Windsor on May 25 and arrived in Toronto today as a means of raising awareness of injured workers' fight for fair and just compensation.

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Since November 2015, they have been supported in that fight by the OFL and more than 20 health care professionals who have come forward to expose the WSIB's shameful treatment of injured workers and to urge a formal investigation by the Ontario Ombudsman. These medical experts have confirmed that the WSIB is denying legitimate claims, forcing workers to return to work too soon, cutting benefits, and revictimizing the very workers it is supposed to protect.

Speaker, any Ontarian with knowledge of what the WSIB is doing to injured workers should contact the Ombudsman now. If the Liberals won't listen to injured workers and health care professionals, maybe they will listen to the Ombudsman.

ROTARY CLASSIC SUPERHERO RUN

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: This past Sunday, Batman, Spiderman and Wonder Woman ran in the 30th annual Rotary Classic Superhero Run in Cambridge.

This run is called the Superhero Run not just because the people dress up as superheroes, but because what this organization does is truly heroic. All of the proceeds of the fun run are donated to the local KidsAbility Centre for Child Development branch, which provides services for children with physical, communication or developmental disabilities. These services are vital to many of

my families in Waterloo region: services like speech therapy, physical therapy and supports for children with developmental disabilities.

It was a perfect day to attend such a great event, although it was hot running in superhero masks. There was both a 2.5-kilometre and a five-kilometre run; tons of entertainment for the little ones, including a bouncy castle, face paints etc.; and there were prizes for the top child fundraisers. The top boy and girl each won a brand new bicycle for their support of KidsAbility. Linda Kenny, executive director of KidsAbility, and her staff were delighted, and celebrated the great turnout of over 400 runners and the over \$30,000 raised.

I want to thank Waterloo region police chief Bryan Larkin, this year's honorary chair, as well as Kristen Danson and Don Daggett, who were co-chairs for the Rotary Classic Superhero Run, for their and all of the other volunteers' efforts in organizing this year's event.

PORTUGUESE HISTORY AND HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I would like to recognize today as the beginning of Portuguese History and Heritage Month in Ontario. During the month of June, we embrace the Portuguese culture and heritage through many joyous festivals and celebrations. On June 10, we also celebrate Portugal Day, or Dia de Camões, where we commemorate the death of Luis de Camões, who passed away in 1580. Luis is considered Portugal's greatest poet, as he wrote about the historic Portuguese explorers who travelled to North America and Canada from as early as the 15th century. Also, 2016 marks the 515th anniversary of the arrival of the Portuguese explorers in Canada.

The vibrant Portuguese community has contributed so much to the growth and development of our province from the 15th century onwards, and it continues to excel in our society today. For instance, hailing from the great riding of Dufferin-Caledon is Woolwich Dairy. A proud Portuguese family by the name of Dutra had the best goat cheese in Ontario and across Canada, and as a result they had a positive impact on the Ontario dairy industry throughout rural Ontario. That's just one example of many.

I encourage all Ontarians to join the celebrations and festivities so that they too can experience Portugal's vibrant culture. I've already started to do so. I had the opportunity to visit the Portuguese Pioneer Museum in Toronto a couple of weeks ago. We need to embrace their heritage and the success of their growing in the spirit of their culture in Ontario. Next week we celebrate with a flag-raising, and I hope to see you all there.

QUEST FOR GOLD ATHLETE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: It is a privilege to share good news from my great riding of Mississauga-Brampton South. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport has announced that four of my constituents will receive

funding through the Quest for Gold program, which each year helps to support athletes' success. Athletes bring pride to our community and serve as examples of what can be achieved through courage and determination and by setting the bar for our personal goals high. Through this, they are inspirational to all of us.

The Quest for Gold program will help these young people afford the cost of training and competing in ice hockey, rugby, curling and basketball events at the provincial, national and international levels, even as they pursue non-athletic careers.

I would like to congratulate Courtney Birchard, D'Shawn Bowen, Brenda Holloway and Jahmal Jones for all their hard work, diligence and success, and for being a great example to our youth. We are proud of you, we will be watching for you, and best of luck in your sporting endeavours.

GRANT DOKIS

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I'm so pleased to rise today to say thank you to Constable Grant Dokis, who recently retired after 30 years of service with the Greater Sudbury Police Service. Constable Dokis started his career in policing as the service's first First Nations officer. Constable Dokis worked as a plainclothes officer, on patrol in the tactical unit and as the aboriginal liaison officer.

But that wasn't all that he did. He was instrumental in creating the aboriginal liaison unit with the Greater Sudbury Police Service, which, at the time, I believe was one of only three in the entire province. Constable Dokis also helped establish the MKWA police ride-along program. The program was named after the bear and the protection that the bear gives. Since 2005, hundreds of students in Greater Sudbury have spent the day riding on patrol with officers, learning about the role a police officer plays in our community and building trust.

But he wasn't done there. He sat on several committees, including the multicultural and multiracial relations, aboriginal homelessness and gang resistance strategy committees, as well as the missing and murdered indigenous women committee in my community of Sudbury.

Also, Constable Grant Dokis was a great hockey player. I had to play against him a few times. With that, I'm sure he'll have a lot of time to spend with his family and play a little bit more hockey.

Thank you, Grant, for your service.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr44, An Act to revive 1733387 Ontario Corp.

Bill Pr45, An Act respecting the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed. Carried.

Report adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENIORS ACTIVE LIVING CENTRES ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LES CENTRES DE VIE ACTIVE POUR PERSONNES ÂGÉES

Mr. Sergio moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 209, An Act to revise the law with respect to funding active living programs that are primarily for seniors / Projet de loi 209, Loi modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne le financement des programmes de vie active qui s'adressent principalement aux personnes âgées.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Mario Sergio: I'll make my statement during ministerial statements.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice with respect to private members' public bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that the order of the House dated November 20, 2014, referring Bill 41, An Act to establish the Lung Health Advisory Council and develop a provincial action plan respecting lung disease, to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills be discharged; and

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That Bill 41 be instead referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

That the Standing Committee on Social Policy meet in Toronto at its regularly scheduled time on Monday, June 6, 2016, for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 41; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 41:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 12 p.m. on Friday, June 3, 2016; and

—That the Clerk of the Committee provide a list of all interested presenters to the subcommittee following the deadline for requests.

—That the Clerk of the Committee be authorized to schedule all interested presenters, if all requests received by the deadline can be accommodated.

—That each member of the subcommittee or their designate provide the Clerk of the Committee a prioritized list of presenters chosen from the Clerk's list, should the number of requests exceed the number of time slots available.

—That each witness receive up to 10 minutes for their presentation followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

—That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Monday, June 6, 2016.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that the order of the House dated November 20, 2014, referring Bill 41, An Act to establish—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispense. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

SENIORS' MONTH

Hon. Mario Sergio: Before I delve into my statement, I have some wonderful guests that I would like to introduce as part of my statement. I want to start with Sue Hesjedahl from the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario, Shilpi Majumder from the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors, and, of course, Speaker, I introduce all of my staff—I won't go name by name, but Ferdinando Longo, my chief of staff.

I'm going to go into my statement, Speaker, and it's a privilege to rise today. June in Ontario is Seniors' Month. For 32 years now we have taken this month to recognize and celebrate the contributions that seniors make to our communities and our province. The theme of this year's celebration is "Seniors Making a Difference," which is entirely appropriate since they do make a difference in so many different ways.

In my role as minister, I can say with pride that this government has made a difference for seniors as well. Our action plan for seniors laid the foundation for investment to help seniors stay active, safe and engaged in their

communities. With programs such as our Age-Friendly Community Planning Grant Program that invested \$1.5 million in 56 projects over the past two years, and the Seniors Community Grant Program that funded 544 projects benefiting over 116,000 seniors in its first two years alone, this government has made seniors a priority. But I think we can all agree the priority today is about celebrating and cherishing the people who helped get us where we are, who helped build all that we have. That's what Seniors' Month is all about.

It is therefore very fitting that earlier today I introduced legislative proposals that, if passed, would modernize the Elderly Persons Centres Act. The Seniors Active Living Centres Act, if passed, would help us to ensure that Ontario's network of 263 elderly persons centres can continue providing this province's seniors with social and recreational programs, as well as health education and support services, under a modernized law with a new name: Seniors Active Living Centres.

Speaker, an extensive review and consultation process led us to the conclusion that these centres fulfill an important role but need to be modernized. The Elderly Persons Centres Act hadn't been reviewed since 1966. This legislation would, if passed, give the program greater flexibility to be more responsive and to potentially reach beyond the approximately 100,000 seniors it serves each year.

If passed, it would help the centres build strong partnerships and strengthen the services they offer to seniors, fostering the locations as community hubs that provide a central access point for a range of health, social and cultural services.

It would also allow the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat to leverage innovation in the sector through partnerships and investment opportunities with post-secondary institutions, First Nations or retirement homes.

There are more than two million seniors in Ontario today, and this number is expected to double over the next 25 years. These centres will be even more important for seniors in the years to come. It is more important than ever that we continue working hard together to make the province of Ontario the best place to grow old.

Speaker, all the best to everyone during Seniors' Month.

NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm honoured to rise today to recognize National Access Awareness Week here in Ontario, which runs until June 6.

We're joined in the gallery today by a good friend of many of us here, Joe Dowdall. He is with the International Union of Operating Engineers, an important part of our partnership council, which has made recommendations. It's chaired by Bob Stark—I think that Bob was a deputy minister in this government at some point in time—with a number of champions of accessibility, both in the private sector and in the accessibility community, to provide

us with advice on ways we can increase employment. I want to thank Joe for being here, and I know that a number of his team are here as well. They're at a reception with our former Lieutenant Governor, David Onley, which is taking place right now.

This is an important week, Mr. Speaker, which celebrates people with disabilities and raises awareness about supporting access in all of our communities. It's a week that puts the spotlight on the cultural shift we're experiencing; one where all people can participate equally in our society.

To this end, I'd like to recognize again the members of the Partnership Council for Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities. They've recently completed their mandate to advise our government on how to encourage this cultural shift, which is so important, and to help us find more opportunities for people with disabilities.

I'd like to welcome the members who are here, Joe in particular, and I want to thank them very much for their hard work. I can assure them that their hard work will result in very tangible steps forward that our government will certainly take.

Last year, we marked the halfway point in our commitment to making Ontario an accessible province by 2025. We've come a long way in making our province more inclusive. We're a global leader in accessibility: first in the world to move to a modern regulatory regime that mandates accessibility, first in the world to require staff to be trained in accessibility and first in Canada with legislation that sets out clear goals and time frames for compliance. We're the only jurisdiction in Canada that has enforceable standards at all.

Although all of this sounds great, I also know that we have not done enough yet if we're going to get where we need to be by 2025. National Access Awareness Week helps to raise awareness, and helps to continue promoting that cultural shift that's so important.

We need communities, businesses and individuals across Ontario to understand that inclusion is important for building a strong society and developing a dynamic economy. The 2010 Martin Prosperity Institute report outlined that an inclusive Ontario would result in a \$7.9-billion increase to gross domestic product. Mr. Speaker, that's \$7.9 billion—not million, but billion—that that would add to our economy.

There are 1.3 billion people with disabilities across the world. That's an emerging market the size of China. Think about it: That's a huge economic opportunity. More than \$150 billion is lost in tax revenue annually due to the limited inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce.

1530

The story here is clear, Mr. Speaker: Fostering inclusion is worth it. That's why I was encouraged to see many municipalities across Ontario working to show why inclusion matters. For example, the city of Kawartha Lakes is hosting a Map-a-thon so that visitors and residents can find accessibility features at city facilities and outdoor spaces.

The town of Milton is hosting an event for local business owners to raise awareness about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and creating accessible workplaces.

The town of Ajax has a variety of activities planned, including presentations to local schools and helping Scout groups learn how they can earn accessibility awareness badges.

Today, the David C. Onley awards will be given to individuals and organizations who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in creating awareness of accessibility and disability issues in their communities. I'm proud of today's winners for stepping up to the plate to build a more accessible province for future generations.

Recently, my ministry supported the Accessibility Innovation Showcase. It was the second annual event of its kind, designed to highlight technologies that are helping to create a more level playing field in our homes and in our businesses. Forward-thinking companies know that increasing accessibility with disruptive technologies and inclusive hiring practices can grow businesses and will grow our economy. They know that hiring the best and brightest includes drawing from diverse talent pools.

Earlier this spring, we launched Rate Drop Rebate, a partnership with leading financial institutions that is encouraging businesses to hire people facing barriers, including people with disabilities. The rebate is expected to help up to 1,100 people find jobs while supporting up to 500 businesses.

Ontario is working to better connect people with disabilities to the labour market and engaging and supporting their employers. As part of our commitment from the 2016 budget, we're developing a provincial employment strategy for people with disabilities.

Our accessibility action plan focuses on three key priorities: engaging employers to hire people with disabilities; building on our accessibility laws and standards; and promoting Ontario's cultural shift to build awareness of accessibility.

Next, we're working with businesses and other stakeholders towards an accessibility certification program which would make it easier for people to identify accessible businesses and organizations. This program, modelled on the LEED designation for environmental sustainability, would help raise awareness of what accessibility looks like in our society.

Through an open and participatory process, seven proposals were put forward for an accessibility certification program, and we received over 200 public comments on them. I'd like to thank all the individuals and organizations who took the time to participate in this important process.

We're now looking at all the prototypes and considering how a certification pilot could be developed. I'm confident that the accessibility certification can help strengthen Ontario's culture of inclusion, increase job opportunities for people with disabilities and grow our economy.

Finally, we're also working with stakeholders to develop an online platform where anyone can rate a

business based on their accessibility. I hope to make that announcement in the near future.

We're committed to breaking down barriers and raising the profile of accessibility. We know that accessibility is far more than just building ramps. It's about the small things you don't see, like getting people to places that they need to be on time and comfortably on accessible, seamless transit—something that, in the greater Toronto area, we have yet to achieve—or making sure we provide information in ways that meet everyone's needs, which is so important.

Access Awareness Week is a chance to show what we've done, and also focus on what we can do to empower businesses, enlighten communities and embrace inclusion.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statements by ministries?

It is time for responses.

SENIORS' MONTH

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm pleased to mark Seniors' Month on behalf of Patrick Brown and our Progressive Conservative caucus. Today, we pay a special tribute to senior citizens across Ontario and honour the many contributions and sacrifices that they have made to help build this great province. It is also a time to think about how we should be paying back our seniors after they have given us a lifetime of service and supporting them by way of making Ontario truly the best place to retire in comfort and dignity.

As all of us are aware, the number of seniors in Ontario will double over the next two decades. So, as aging is set to become the most important issue facing our society, we're dismayed to see this government cut our seniors' essential services and programs. At a time when we should be investing to keep our seniors healthy, active and engaged, this government is instead:

—cutting their physiotherapy, which means seniors are no longer receiving the care they're entitled to through their OHIP physiotherapy providers;

—cutting home care for seniors who want to stay at home;

—cancelling seniors' tax credits, such as the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit, that help them live independently at home longer;

—hiking hydro bills and essentially asking seniors to pay for the government's 13 years of financial mismanagement; and

—trying to sneak in higher drug costs at a time when seniors are living with more complex health needs.

For the many Ontarians who have loved ones in long-term care, we do applaud that the province has listened and developed a strategy for Alzheimer's and dementia care. But more needs to be done, as we have 24,000 seniors without access to a nursing bed in Ontario today and a wait-list that will double to 50,000 seniors in just six years. And even those who have access to a bed—many of them are not up to the standards that families would expect.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to hear from concerned families who are calling for proper oversight and protection for long-term-care residents. This is something the government continues to fail to do, as highlighted in successive Auditor General reports. The fact that the government is not providing the oversight that they promised to provide is simply unacceptable.

Speaker, we believe seniors deserve better. I ask the government to stand up for seniors and commit to building the needed nursing beds that would see the elimination of the beds backlog, to fix home care and to make proper investments so the system is equipped to handle our seniors' needs today and in the future.

NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: This week marks National Access Awareness Week. National Access Awareness Week was developed by the esteemed Rick Hansen after his Man in Motion World Tour. This week, we are all challenged to recognize barriers to accessibility and plan for their removal.

National Access Awareness Week has four objectives: assess the accessibility of services and facilities; set measurable goals; make practical improvements; and celebrate achievements.

I believe Ontario has made great progress when it comes to accessibility. This is thanks to the work of local accessibility champions and individuals like Rick Hansen and our former Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable David Onley. However, there is clearly still much more work to be done.

I have had the privilege of meeting with David Lepofsky, chair of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance. David is a true champion of accessibility and has produced the measurable results that are a goal of access awareness week. However, sign on to Twitter and use the hashtag #AODAfail and you'll see how many barriers to accessibility are present in everyday activities.

Key to the AODA Alliance is improved implementation and enforcement of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. They have been clear that if the government is to meet its goal of making Ontario accessible by 2025, significant changes need to be made. Their recommendations include providing direction on accessibility requirements, introducing an education accessibility standard, and giving the Ministry of Community and Social Services the responsibility for the act. The needs and goals have been identified. Now it's time for real change.

Today we are joined by recipients who are receiving the David C. Onley Award for Leadership in Accessibility. I would like to congratulate the recipients and thank them for their dedicated work to improving accessibility in Ontario.

As we recognize National Access Awareness Week, let's continue the important work of making Ontario accessible for all.

SENIORS' MONTH

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I am honoured to provide a ministerial response as the critic for seniors' affairs, on behalf of the Ontario New Democrats and our leader, Andrea Horwath.

June 2016 marks the 32nd anniversary of Seniors' Month in Ontario. It is a time to celebrate and recognize the important role that seniors play in our communities. It is also a good reminder that we have a shared responsibility to ensure that seniors in our communities and families enjoy safe, active and healthy lives.

In my hometown of London, we have incredible organizations and volunteers who work very hard every day to improve the lives of all seniors. Today I want to highlight one particular month-long campaign organized by Meals on Wheels. Meals on Wheels London is inviting all businesses and organizations to support seniors through an office campaign in the month of June. Local businesses can help provide food security to even more seniors and people right here in London. Participating businesses will be made the featured Business of the Day, and as there are 22 business days in the month of June, they hope to fill every one of them.

Meals on Wheels London has also created a list of suggested activities for businesses to show their support, including offering staff a dress-down day and donating the proceeds; and ordering lunch from the local Subway, where every lunch purchased will provide a nutritious meal to three other people who are struggling with basic food needs in our community, and Meals on Wheels staff will even deliver your meals personally.

1540

As you can see, I am not alone in my belief that it is our shared duty to make sure Ontario seniors are living with dignity and in their own homes as long as possible. We need to ensure that they have access to the supports that they have paid into their entire lives, and that those supports are available to them when they need them. Let our approach be measured with wisdom, kindness and gratitude for the lifetime of contributions they have made.

This Seniors' Month, I ask everyone to take the time to reflect on the seniors in your families and communities. Reach out and let them know how important and valued they are. Celebrate their determination, pride and dignity by fighting to protect those who have already fought for you.

NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

Ms. Sarah Campbell: It's an honour to rise today to speak in celebration of National Access Awareness Week. Bringing together 23 national partners and eight corporate sponsors participating in National Access Awareness Week, the main focus of this week is on the issues of education, transportation, housing, employment and recreation.

National Access Awareness Week is intended to raise public awareness of the barriers faced by people with disabilities, to encourage communities to assess the level of accessibility in their jurisdiction, and to plan for the removal of barriers. For many, access means more than just removing physical barriers; it means changes in attitudes and support that allows people with visible and invisible disabilities to be part of community life. People with learning, developmental and psychiatric disabilities or other invisible impairments should not be forgotten when we strive for equal access.

I would like to highlight some of the great work undertaken by the accessibility advisory committee for Kenora, in my riding of Kenora–Rainy River. This committee is tasked with highlighting the positive changes for people living with disabilities that have happened in the city, as well as bringing awareness to work that still needs to be done. Two years ago, the StopGap community ramp project brought together volunteers in Kenora and encouraged businesses to have small ramps built for their storefronts to increase accessibility for people who wanted to visit their stores.

Speaker, while we are all celebrating National Access Awareness Week, it is important to remember that there needs to be legislation in place to give those living with disabilities full equality. Here in Ontario, we have the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Unfortunately, this Liberal government has failed to implement adequate and timely standards, and 2025 is the target year for completion. We know that 60% of the private sector is not compliant with filing the required reports and is perhaps not even compliant with doing the work that they need to do by this period of time. I think that as legislators, we need to make sure that the AODA is implemented and audited regularly, and to ensure compliance, because without compliance, we don't have inclusion for the thousands of people across this province who are living with disabilities. My hope is that all of us as MPPs will take it upon ourselves to ensure that everyone in the province has full and equal access to community life.

PETITIONS

STRAY CURRENT

Mr. Rick Nicholls: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas stray current has adverse effects on animal and human health; and

“Whereas the livelihoods of many Ontario livestock farmers including dairy farmers have been jeopardized or completely lost due to stray current issues;

“Whereas the Ontario government should regulate the occurrence of stray current with legislation in order to ensure that all parties involved or affected have a clear process set out to eliminate stray current;

“Whereas the issues of stray current can be addressed through changes in both the policy and practice of the provincially regulated electrical distribution and electrical service industries;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“For the government of Ontario to fully commit to addressing the issues of stray current by promptly calling Bill 161, an act to eliminate ground current pollution act, (2016), to committee and having the bill proceed promptly to debate at third reading, and then on to receiving royal assent.”

I approve of this petition and I will hand it to page Jacob.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition signed by hundreds of Londoners that was presented to me last week by Ange Thompson of the Hydro One Not for Sale coalition in London. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the provincial government is creating a privatization scheme that will lead to higher hydro rates, lower reliability, and hundreds of millions less for our schools, roads, and hospitals; and

“Whereas the privatization scheme will be particularly harmful to northern and First Nations communities; and

“Whereas the provincial government is creating this privatization scheme under a veil of secrecy that means Ontarians don't have a say on a change that will affect their lives dramatically; and

“Whereas it is not too late to cancel the scheme;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the province of Ontario immediately cancel its scheme to privatize Ontario's Hydro One.”

I couldn't agree more. I affix my name and will give it to page Sulin to take to the table.

GO TRANSIT

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Cambridge, Ontario, is a municipality of over 125,000 people, many of whom commute into the greater Toronto area daily;

“Whereas the current commuting options available for travel between the Waterloo region and the GTA are inefficient and time-consuming, as well as environmentally damaging;

“Whereas the residents of Cambridge and the Waterloo region believe that they would be well-served by commuter rail transit that connects the region to the Milton line, and that this infrastructure would have positive, tangible economic benefits to the province of Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Direct crown agency Metrolinx to commission a feasibility study into building a rail line that connects the city of Cambridge to the GO train station in Milton, and to complete this study in a timely manner and communicate the results to the municipal government of Cambridge."

I agree with the petition, affix my name and send it with Colleen.

CHILDREN'S IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the province of Ontario has a plan and/or action to amend the legislation under the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) regarding religious and conscientious exemption regulations;

"Whereas the proposed and/or tabled amendment requiring 'education sessions' interferes with our informed consent rights as specified in Ontario's Health Care Consent Act, 1996, specifically 'Elements of consent' 11(1)3, 'The consent must be given voluntarily' and 4, 'The consent must not be obtained through misrepresentation or fraud;'

"Whereas the proposed and/or tabled amendment interferes with our constitutional rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

"Whereas vaccines are injected, complex biochemical compounds that carry a risk of injury and death;

"Whereas the province of Ontario and the government of Canada take no responsibility for vaccine injuries and deaths;

"Whereas education sessions are a waste of limited health care dollars that could be better spent elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Cease the passing of any legislation under the Immunization of School Pupils Act that would require Ontario residents who have made a religious or conscientious decision to exempt their child from any or all vaccinations under the act:

"(1) to submit to an 'education session' or

"(2) to submit to any other coerced and/or forced measures under the ISPA."

Thank you very much for allowing me the time to present this petition.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: \$15 and fairness.

"Whereas a growing number of Ontarians are concerned about the growth in low-wage, part-time, casual, temporary and insecure employment;

"Whereas too many workers are not protected by the minimum standards outlined in existing employment and labour laws; and

"Whereas the Ontario government is currently engaging in a public consultation to review and improve employment and labour laws in the province;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement a decent work agenda by making sure that Ontario's labour and employment laws:

"—require all workers be entitled to a starting wage that reflects a uniform, provincial minimum, regardless of a worker's age, job or sector of employment;

"—promote full-time, permanent work with adequate hours for all those who choose it;

"—ensure part-time, temporary, casual and contract workers receive the same pay and benefits as their full-time, permanent counterparts;

"—provide at least seven (7) days of paid sick leave each year;

"—support job security for workers when companies or contracts change ownership;

"—prevent employers from downloading their responsibilities for minimum standards onto temp agencies, subcontractors or workers themselves;

"—extend minimum protections to all workers by eliminating exemptions to the laws;

"—protect workers who stand up for their rights;

"—offer proactive enforcement of laws, supported by adequate public staffing and meaningful penalties for employers who violate the law;

1550

"—make it easier for workers to join unions; and

"—ensure all workers are paid at least \$15 an hour."

I agree, Speaker, and I'm going to give it to Waleed to bring up to the desk.

ELDER ABUSE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas today, there are more seniors 65 and over than children under the age of 15, both in Ontario and across Canada;

"Whereas there are currently more than two million seniors aged 65 and over—approximately 15% of the population and this number is expected to double in the next 25 years;

"Whereas Elder Abuse Ontario stated that between 40,000 and 200,000 seniors living in Ontario experienced or are experiencing elder abuse;

"Whereas research showed that abuse against seniors takes many forms and is often perpetrated by family members; ...

"Whereas Bill 148, if passed, will require regulated health professionals to report elder abuse or neglect to the public guardian and trustee office;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly pass Bill 148, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 and the Regulated Health Professions

Act, 1991, requiring health professionals to report any reasonable suspicion that a senior living in the community is being abused or neglected to the public guardian and trustee office.”

I support the petition, and I give my petition to page Nava.

RAIL SERVICE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas both the Canadian government and the Ontario government need a transportation policy, plan and investment that include transporting both passengers and freight by rail; and

“Whereas this is essential for our competitiveness in the world economy, for reducing carbon emissions and for socio-economic connectivity; and

“Whereas we must stop the abandonment of rail and support the safest, more efficient and least polluting mode of transportation: trains; and

“Whereas without rail as part of northern Ontario’s transportation system, most of our communities are not sustainable;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government of Ontario provide reliable, safe, all-season, accessible and affordable passenger train service throughout northern Ontario connected to Toronto and Ottawa.”

I agree with this petition, sign my name and give it to page Daniel.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Michael Mantha: “Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

I fully agree with this petition. I present it to page Katelyn to bring down to the Clerks’ table.

HOME INSPECTION INDUSTRY

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the home inspector industry remains largely unregulated; and

“Whereas homeowners are increasingly reliant on home inspectors to make an educated home purchase; and

“Whereas the unregulated industry poses a risk to consumers;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To protect consumers by regulating the home inspection industry and licensing home inspectors.”

I agree with the petition, sign my name and send it with Ariane down to the table.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is a petition to stop the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

“Whereas the Liberal government has brought forward a payroll tax in the form of a mandatory Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP); and

“Whereas internal Ministry of Finance documents show that the Liberal government are aware that the ORPP will increase the cost of doing business in Ontario and kills jobs in the province; and

“Whereas the government’s plan would force the cancellation of many existing retirement plans that have better employer contribution rates; and”

“Whereas organizations including the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Fraser Institute and the C.D. Howe Institute agree that the ORPP is a poorly thought out plan that will not help Ontarians; and

“Whereas low-income earners will have their retirement savings clawed back under this scheme; and

“Whereas Ontarians cannot afford another tax on top of their already skyrocketing hydro bills;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ontario government immediately stop the implementation of the ORPP.”

I support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Julia to take to the table.

LYME DISEASE

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario does not have a strategy on Lyme disease; and

“Whereas the Public Health Agency of Canada is developing an Action Plan on Lyme Disease; and

“Whereas Toronto Public Health says that transmission of the disease requires the tick to be attached for

24 hours, so early intervention and diagnosis is of primary importance; and

“Whereas a motion was introduced to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario encouraging the government to adopt a strategy on Lyme disease, while taking into account the impact the disease has upon individuals and families in Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to develop an integrated strategy on Lyme disease consistent with the action plan of the Public Health Agency of Canada, taking into account available treatments, accessibility issues and the efficacy of the currently available diagnostic mechanisms. In so doing, it should consult with representatives of the health care community and patients’ groups within one year.”

I support this, will affix my signature and give it to page Waleed to deliver to the table.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have another petition here called “Planning for Ontario’s Future,” and it’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

“Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

“Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians.”

I agree with the petition and send it down to the table with page Thomas.

CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario has a duty to care for and ensure the safety of Ontarians in need of residential care; and

“Whereas alleged abuse and mistreatment occurrences, as recorded in the Serious Occurrence System, almost doubled between 2008 and 2013; and

“Whereas many residential care facilities lack proper closed-circuit video monitoring of common areas where episodes of abuse are most likely to occur; and

“Whereas it is imperative to prevent the occurrence of client abuse and mistreatment in residential care through proven measures;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To consider implementing a policy requiring comprehensive closed-circuit monitoring of residential care facility common areas and provide all forms of assistance, including financial, to allow residential care facilities to roll out appropriate video monitoring systems on their premises.”

I agree with this and will be signing it and sending it off with page Mélinea.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Dog Tales is a world-renowned dog rescue in King City, Ontario, that specializes in the care, rehabilitation and adoption of abused, abandoned and neglected dogs. Since opening in 2014, Dog Tales has found homes for more than 500 dogs in need;

“Whereas Dog Tales employs a full-time staff of 40, including experts in dog care, rehabilitation and training, and has an operating budget in excess of \$1 million per year;

“Whereas the Ontario Dog Owners’ Liability Act prevents certain breeds from being owned or housed within the province which has resulted in the unnecessary euthanasia of thousands of innocent dogs and puppies, despite numerous studies proving that this legislation has not been effective in reducing the overall number of dog bites in the province since implementation;

“Whereas sections 6(d) and 20(2)(e) of the Dog Owners’ Liability Act allow the provincial government to designate bodies within Ontario so that dogs affected by the legislation can have a place to go when in need;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Direct the Lieutenant Governor in Council to grant Dog Tales a designation under the Dog Owners’ Liability Act that will allow breeds affected by Ontario’s breed-specific legislation to be housed at their rescue for transition to out-of-province adoption or permanent sanctuary.”

I support this petition and send to it the desk with Katelyn.

1600

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The time for petitions is over.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day. Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. David Orazietti: The government calls order G186.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): Order G186, third reading of Bill 186, An Act to establish the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. Ms. Hunter.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome some guests that are here today: Scott Clausen, who is an actuary—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Excuse me. We're going to stop that process of introducing people in the afternoon. We've been directed that that's not to continue.

Interjection: It's in her speech.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You have to move it first, right?

Interjection: It's part of her speech.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Oh, okay, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely.

Interjection: It's not out of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I don't need any extra help.

Minister?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I move third reading of Bill 186, An Act to establish the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. Is that what you need me to say?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): This has been a great day for confusion.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION
PLAN ACT (STRENGTHENING
RETIREMENT SECURITY
FOR ONTARIANS), 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE RÉGIME
DE RETRAITE DE LA PROVINCE
DE L'ONTARIO (SÉCURISER LA RETRAITE
EN ONTARIO)

Ms. Hunter moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 186, An Act to establish the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan/ Projet de loi 186, Loi établissant le Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The minister has moved Bill 186. Minister?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

It's my pleasure to rise in the House today for the third reading of Bill 186, Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act (Strengthening Retirement Security for Ontarians), 2016.

I'd just like to take a moment to welcome a number of people who are here today: Scott Clausen, who is an actuary and partner at Mercer; J.P. Provost, who is the global leader for their international consulting practice; and David Knox, who is a senior partner at Mercer and who flew in all the way from Australia.

I really welcome you here. Thank you so much for joining us today and listening to this very important debate.

I would like to begin by thanking the members of this House for their thoughtful debate that has taken place on this very important piece of legislation. I especially want to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Social Policy for their feedback and their contributions to the legislative process.

In particular, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the member for Cambridge, my friend and colleague Kathryn McGarry, for her leadership in steering this bill through the committee process. Thank you so much.

The work of the committee has spearheaded some of the most important amendments that bring more clarity to employers and to employees, such as including a definition of "employee"; adding a definition of "remuneration" that can be applied to the comparability test; and amending the bill to offer more clarity for plan members.

Thank you, MPP McGarry, for your leadership, and to all the members of the committee.

Finally, I'd like to give my thanks to the groups that took the time to share their valuable insights with members of the committee during public hearings.

Since taking on the role of Associate Minister of Finance responsible for the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, my mandate has been clear: to help strengthen retirement security for all working Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, we know that too many Ontarians are not saving enough for retirement. Two thirds of Ontario's workers do not participate in a workplace pension plan. The proportion among young workers is even higher, at 75%. Three out of four workers aged 25 to 34 do not participate in a workplace pension plan.

For many workers today, permanent and full-time employment with pension benefits is no longer a possibility. When combined with longer lifespans, low personal savings and an average CPP benefit of just over \$6,900 per year, the result is a growing gap between what Ontarians need to save for a secure retirement and what they will actually have to spend in retirement. That's where the ORPP comes in.

I would like to quote Sheila Block from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, who said, during the committee hearings on this bill, "The ORPP is the most significant improvement in retirement security since the introduction of the CPP in 1966." This was mirrored by Hugh Mackenzie, who said that the ORPP "represents a great start in the evolution of our retirement" income "system towards one consistent with the needs of today's employees."

Mr. Speaker, we know that the ORPP will provide far-reaching benefits, both for individuals and the economy. It will allow for more spending in our communities and in our local businesses. It will mean a decreased reliance on social services, and it will provide a greater quality of life for retirees.

For nearly two years, I've heard this sentiment echoed over and over again. Throughout the plan design process, our government met with thousands of Ontarians. I led extensive consultations on key design features of the plan, where I travelled to more than 10 communities throughout the province and received over 1,000 written submissions. I spoke with employers, associations, labour groups, pension experts, individuals, families and, of course, retirees.

The consistent message I heard was that people are concerned about their ability to save for their retirement.

They're also concerned about the next generation: their children and grandchildren. They want to know that they will be able to retire with the security and dignity that they deserve after a lifetime of work.

As we heard from the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, or CARP, during the committee hearings, "While many, in fact most, of our members would not be in a position to benefit from an increase to either a CPP or an ORPP plan, there was strong, strong support for such an enhancement, with less than 10% of our members feeling that the younger generation is saving enough, many of them being concerned about their children and their grandchildren...."

In Windsor, for example, I heard from a retired teacher who spoke passionately about the value that a secure pension has had for her. For her, life happened. She became a widow at 57. Without a pension, she would not have been able to make ends meet. But because she made contributions all those years, today she has a pension she can rely on.

What I also heard is that Ontarians want their government to show leadership on this issue. This was reiterated in the committee hearings on Bill 186. Representatives from Unifor told us, "The ORPP is a solution to the retirement income crisis. The Ontario government should act now to avert a retirement income crisis, and the ORPP is well suited to address the risks in retirement income and the changing workplace conditions that have created the current crisis in retirement income."

Mr. Speaker, that is why we're moving ahead with the ORPP. If we fail to take action now, many of today's workers will see a drop in their standard of living in retirement. The impact of a future generation of seniors retiring without adequate savings would place pressure on social services. It would lead to less spending in our local communities. That's not good for people, that's not good for business and that's not good for the economy.

The ORPP would help shrink the retirement savings gap. It will expand pension coverage to over four million Ontario workers. It will provide those workers with a predictable stream of income in retirement paid for life.

As we've previously announced, employers and employees would contribute equally to the plan to ensure fairness. Each will contribute up to 1.9% of their earnings on a maximum annual income of \$90,000. ORPP benefits would be earned as contributions are made, and the level of benefit would depend on the length of time an individual contributes to the plan and their salary during those years.

The ORPP will aim to replace 15% of an individual's pre-retirement earnings after 40 years of contributions. Together with the CPP, this would provide a strong retirement income floor that people can rely on.

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The ORPP will also offer a survivor benefit. Importantly, unlike the CPP, the ORPP survivor benefit would be payable not just to a surviving spouse but also to a member's designated beneficiary or estate, if the member was single. The advice I heard from the seniors' secretar-

iat advisory committee was that many of today's retirees and seniors are single women, and that we need to ensure this plan is fair to them.

On issues such as the self-employed, we know there is still progress to be made. I've heard from self-employed workers that they want to be enrolled in the ORPP. For example, I heard from a successful lawyer who told me she wanted to be in the ORPP. Although she has an RRSP, she saw much of its value disappear in 2008. She reflected on the confidence that the ORPP would bring, knowing that her contributions would accrue in the background and provide security when she retires.

Mr. Speaker, current rules under the federal Income Tax Act do not allow for the self-employed to be enrolled in the ORPP. We are working closely with our federal partners on this issue, and the bill allows for the enrolment of the self-employed for future accommodations once they are made.

To ensure benefits are there for members when they retire, the sustainability of the ORPP is critical to our government. Ontario is a world leader in creating strong public sector pension plans. In developing the ORPP, we've built on the expertise and best practices of our internationally recognized plans to ensure that the ORPP is top-performing.

Bill 186 lays out clear rules to ensure the ORPP's sustainability for generations to come. Both benefits and contributions will be indexed to inflation to ensure that they maintain their value over time.

At the same time, we know that employers and employees need time to prepare for the ORPP and that businesses need certainty as they make their preparations. That is what Bill 186 provides, Mr. Speaker. By enshrining the plan's design details, this bill delivers on our commitment to give employers and employees the clarity they need to prepare for the launch of the ORPP. Together with regulations, the bill provides the key pieces of information that employers need as we move forward with implementation.

It also reinforces our commitment to begin enrolling employers in the ORPP in January 2017, with contributions starting on January 1, 2018, for large and medium-sized employers. Small employers will have until 2019 before they begin making contributions. For all three groups, contributions will be phased in over three years, starting at 0.8% in the first year, 1.6% in the second year and, finally, 1.9% in the third year. Employers that already have a registered workplace pension plan that doesn't meet our comparability threshold will have until 2020 before they begin making contributions.

This phased-in approach is similar to that taken by the federal government when it increased CPP premiums in the 1990s. Pension expert Keith Ambachtsheer has pointed out that during that period the national unemployment rate actually fell from 9.6% to 7.6%.

Mr. Speaker, last year our government passed the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Administration Corporation Act, 2015, to create the ORPP Administration Corp. The ORPP AC is the independent, arm's-length body that

will be responsible for administering the pension plan and managing the plan's investment for its beneficiaries.

Through a strong accountability and transparency framework, the board of directors and management team of the ORPP Administration Corp. will be fully accountable to plan members. Accountability measures include annual reporting, annual meetings that are open to members of the plan, and strong financial control.

The government will not determine where and how ORPP contributions are invested, and they will not form part of the government's consolidated general revenues. Instead, these funds would be held in trust by the ORPP Administration Corp. for the benefit of the members of the plan. Bill 186 reaffirms this.

Mr. Speaker, this bill, if passed, will not only expand pension coverage to millions of Ontario workers; it will bring financial security and drive economic growth for generations to come. The Conference Board of Canada's cost-benefit analysis of the ORPP tabled last December confirms that both the economy and Ontarians would be better off with the ORPP. In the long term, it would be expected to add billions of dollars to the economy while providing a cost-effective means of helping individuals save for retirement. This legislation is another significant step in our journey towards ensuring that by 2020, all eligible Ontario workers would be covered by a comparable workplace plan or the ORPP.

Ontario has long been a champion of strengthening the retirement income security system and is pleased that the federal government shares this commitment. We're continuing to work collaboratively with the federal government, provinces and territories to make progress on a CPP enhancement that addresses the needs of future retirees. But we also know that we need to make progress now to ensure Ontarians can achieve the retirement security they deserve. That's why we're moving forward with this important piece of legislation.

It is critical for the future well-being of Ontarians and our economy that we take action now to ensure that future retirees can achieve financial security in retirement and that Ontario's economy remains strong. We must ensure that Ontarians are confident in their ability to retire with dignity and security. The ORPP is an integral part of the government's economic plan to build Ontario up and deliver on its number one priority to grow the economy and create jobs.

The passing of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act (Strengthening Retirement Security for Ontarians), 2016, is an important step in modernizing the retirement income system in our province. I am asking the members of this assembly to support this important legislation for future generations of retirees and for all working Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to make some comments today on the ORPP.

I want to begin by talking about the fact that pensions are a relatively new invention. If you go back to the time

of our grandparents and 100 years ago, people simply worked until they died, and they had no security whatsoever. About 50 years ago, people recognized the opportunities that pensions might provide for people. As a result, you have the creation of the Canada Pension Plan and the kind of contribution that it has made for people subsequently.

The circumstances of then and now are worth comparing. People worked and retired, and their life expectancy was so much different than it is today that the investment of an individual's pension plan wasn't expected to spread out over decades. In my own family, my father-in-law retired when he was 62 and lived to be 90, so he certainly was a beneficiary of this kind of security. And there was a return on investment of 6% to 8%, and in some years much higher than that.

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But today the circumstances are very different. We live much longer. We retire earlier. And I don't need to emphasize, I don't think, the importance of a low return on investment. The parameters in which we're operating are certainly very, very different. The demographics—people have forecast that there would be such a demand on pension plans because of the number of people reaching senior designation, so many more today than there were 10 years ago or that there will be in another 20 years.

The issue of pensions, then, has become very much in the public mind with concerns over unfunded liabilities. While the government wants to look at the defined benefit pension plans—and many of the examples used, of course, are people who have defined benefit plans—those are the ones that then can easily become ones that carry huge unfunded liabilities. And who pays for those? Well, ultimately, in the public sector it becomes the taxpayers' responsibility.

But in the meantime, there have been a myriad of plans that have evolved over the last 50 years that speak to different needs of people. For instance, the RRSP provides a defined contribution. It also then provides options and, a particularly important theme, choice in being able to make decisions of your financial future on your own.

TFSAs are another example of that opportunity to make a choice. One of the things that people need to recognize is the fact that they can take those RRSPs or TFSAs, use them for their own purposes and pay back in. There's a flexibility that makes them quite different than that which we see in a pension plan like CPP.

With the aging population, obviously new pressures have come along and people have to have taken a greater interest in financial literacy to be able to have a sense of what their positions are and what they can do. The insecurity—and the previous speaker made reference to the crisis in pension, but that kind of language obviously is designed to make people start to worry about whether or not they have enough, whether their future is secure. It's into that atmosphere that the idea of an ORPP was introduced by the government.

There are a couple of things that we need to understand about the ORPP. One of the key ideas in this is that

they're mandatory, so everyone should have an at-work pension. It sounds great, but the question then becomes: Who pays? In this environment, in the ORPP, the workplace is the mandatory payer along with the employee. Certainly when people began to understand what the ORPP stood for, they began to become somewhat concerned. That concern has only grown and grown since it was first introduced.

The ORPP, then, from its very beginning, was mandatory—a mandatory amount, 1.9%, by the employer and by the employee. It's interesting, in the conversations that I had with employers—and this has been a piece that has been around for almost two years—the employers would say to me, "Oh, that's a great idea." And then I'd say, "Well, you will be 50% of the contribution." "Oh, no, I can't afford to have 1.9% for every employee." And employees themselves, when they discovered that they had to make a contribution of that nature, were equally concerned.

When people began to look at what 1.9% meant to them and their business, in many, many cases, people realized that they had to find the money somewhere, and the somewhere would be fewer hours—cutting hours for employees—or, in fact, laying off workers. As I recall, the chambers of commerce and the various business groups were able to look at that with greater and greater concern as it became more widely understood.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce put together an open letter to the government, and had over 150 signatories, to express their concern, because they recognized as they consulted with their own membership that this was going to cost jobs. It was a significant number of jobs, in the thousands of jobs, and, obviously, without a job, you can't be paying into a pension. The very people that would be the beneficiaries of an ORPP would, in fact, find themselves with the door firmly shut in their face. So the chambers of commerce, then, did send this open letter to the government to beseech them, quite frankly, to look at an alternative way, because this would cost jobs.

Then, as I say, as word spread, members of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, and the portfolio managers, just to name a few, began to get together and recognize that they needed to educate this government into the realities of such a project. One of the things—after the question of actual job loss, which I can't overstate—is the absolute contradiction of what the proposal purports to do. It just seems impossible to understand why they wouldn't appreciate that 18,000 people in the first year would lose their jobs.

There also was the question of some places already had a pension. Well, then the government introduced—they'd already introduced the notion of mandatory, that everybody is going to have this. Then the next piece that had to be understood: what was designed to be comparable? I'll have more to say in a moment about that.

I think it's really interesting to look at some of the messaging that the government provided on this. For something that has not yet happened, it's quite remarkable how many hundreds of thousands of dollars have

been used in advertising and sort of softening up the public for this. The initial advertising was simply, "Everyone should have a workplace pension." On the surface, that seems like a good idea. But then the question of who pays—well, you do.

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The next part of the advertising was seniors running along and jumping over a water course, because they need a bridge to carry themselves into retirement. But, of course, what the ad did not say was that if you are retired, you would not be eligible for this retirement project.

The latest one that I saw was a senior explaining to what appeared to be a grandchild the merits of a pension, because not too many 16-to-18-year-olds are interested in pensions. In fact, even much older people sometimes think that it's something that they'll look at some other time.

So we have the messages, then, that the government has used to try to make sure that people understand the idea of the pension, but there are certain things that come along every now and then that you need to understand a little more than that one-liner about a workplace pension.

There are a couple of examples that I want to give you. One of them was a study by McKinsey that found that only 23% of Canadians are inadequately prepared for retirement, and they happen to be in the wealthier cohort. Also, lower-income retirees are best protected by existing programs, including CPP, Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement. Further, the McKinsey study never took into account home ownership, non-tax preferred accounts, family assistance or inheritance—the latter estimated to be worth \$1 trillion over the next 20 years.

I want to pause and look at some of the things that are said in that piece I just gave you, because if I talk to my constituents about their retirement, they'll usually turn and look at their house and say, "There's the thing that I have the most amount of money in and the most equity." Many people are living in their homes as retirees with their homes paid for. To not consider that is disingenuous. I think that it's important to look at a broader perspective than the one suggested by the government.

So their suggestion, the ORPP, is not only something that will cost jobs, but it also—as, again, a part of the whole picture—makes companies in Ontario less competitive. We already have the largest subnational debt in the world. We have the highest hydro rates. We have an infrastructure deficit. We have people poaching Ontario businesses out of Ontario, people who are paid to poach businesses out of Ontario, each one of which is then a blow at being competitive. It's not hard to see why the business community has looked at this in a unified voice and said, "We can't do this."

One of the suggestions that has been offered is that, as the numbers will demonstrate, there are certain pockets of people that have more difficulty than others in terms of senior financing. So I think that we need to look at who those people are and what kinds of things that actually would help. It's a balanced approach that would be needed to ensure that the Ontario Retirement Pension

Plan does not undermine any existing plans and disadvantage workers and investment—which, as I've just explained, are all on the chopping block with ORPP.

The very real risk is that Ontario workers will be worse off if employers with already attractive pension plans find themselves unable to continue those plans if they are required to offer the ORPP.

This job-killing payroll tax hinders the ability of the private sector to do what it does best: provide job opportunities for people and strengthen our economy to attract investment.

The pension investments must be made with the best intentions towards the highest return, free of political interference and free to invest anywhere across the world. Pension plans are supposed to be done in the best interests of pensioners and must not be restricted.

I want to pause there because there's a line from the budget of 2014 that contradicts what I just said. It says, "By unlocking value from its assets and encouraging more Ontarians to save through a proposed new Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, new pools of capital would be available for Ontario-based projects such as building roads, bridges and new transit."

The reason that I think it's very important to keep that in mind is that it contradicts what I have just said about pension investments. Pension investments have to be made in the best interests of pensioners. Investment in infrastructure has to be done in the best interests of infrastructure-building. Those two things aren't the same. The pensioner wants a high rate of return. The infrastructure investment is looking for the best bang for the buck. Those are two opposing trends, and the notion that this will be used to provide what they refer to as the "new pool of capital" is chilling indeed.

The ORPP is an idea to achieve a hidden motive, when you look at this. Despite what the government studies say, there is no need for this mandatory payroll contribution.

The plan is unneeded for four fifths of workers who have already sufficient savings for adequate retirement, as shown by Statistics Canada and McKinsey studies, taking into account all forms of savings. Instead, the plan will hurt many families with new taxes as they deal with child-rearing costs and invest in housing equity, which is the most important retirement asset in later life.

There are pockets of individuals who need support, as I mentioned earlier, such as low-income single seniors facing a poverty rate of 20%. A minority of households with modest incomes below \$60,000 do need additional support. Any pension reform should be targeted, not necessarily broad-based.

The plan unnecessarily extends to many upper-income households with up to \$180,000 in income when two earners retire. This is well beyond any reasonable notion of what is meant by "middle class," since most upper-middle households have the means to ensure a good standard of living.

The plan hurts the middle class. Yet many middle-class individuals will bear much higher tax rates on plan benefits, especially in the \$73,000 to \$90,000 range, as

Old Age Security payments are clawed back. It's hard to believe that this would have gone unnoticed.

The plan provides a poor return to savings for low-income Canadians, who will be provided little personal income tax relief for contributions, yet face a walloping personal tax on benefits with personal taxes and reductions in the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

The personal tax treatment of the ORPP is uncertain. If it is treated similarly to other retirement savings plans under the income tax, the ORPP will provide comparable returns to annuity plans for many middle-income households. If the pension contributions are treated similarly to CPP, only a tiny tax credit based on the low-income tax rate is provided as relief, making the ORPP savings a poor investment for many Ontarians.

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Although it is argued by the government that the ORPP will increase savings, it is quite the contrary. There will be a significant reduction in private savings, as many US and Canadian economic studies have suggested in the past, including a recent one done by the well-respected economist François Vaillancourt at the Université de Montréal.

Equally, the Fraser Institute went back and looked at what happened to savings patterns after CPP was first introduced and savings dipped. People had the idea that they had put away the amount of money they had set aside for savings, and so they dropped by a full per cent their savings as individuals now that they had the CPP.

Ontario had better options that would have or could have avoided many of the issues I've listed. It could have created a voluntary pooled savings plan with automatic enrolment. This, of course, is the PRPP, the pooled registered pension. The pooled registered pension plan is one that is open to people in the provinces where that complementary legislation has been passed. It is certainly something that people in Quebec and Saskatchewan and other places outside Canada that have similar pooling have been able to take advantage of, and they have seen the benefits that come from that.

The other point the government has made about the question of administration—and they compare apples and oranges when they talk about an RRSP, because it could be a group RRSP; it can have very efficient administration costs. This one, while they look at it as being economic to administer, has some inherent problems in terms of administration. One of those is the fact that it will have to keep track of people who come in and out of the province, pay for a while, leave and come back—just keeping track of the monies that they will have accumulated.

It can also be said to be a similar problem for young people who may have part-time jobs. By the way, this starts at age 18, so they may have a part-time job and then find themselves employed when they finish school where there isn't an ORPP. Then they go away and then they come back. They may be in and out during the course of their working life. That will certainly create some costs to administer.

There's also the problem of companies that have employees in Ontario and employees in other provinces and the kind of expense that they will incur from that. There are issues, then, with the cost of administration.

The other thing I suggested a few moments ago is that we have the term "mandatory," and the other term that is important to understand in this is "comparable," for those companies that have defined contribution pensions that the government determines are comparable. So they will be developing plans and obviously costs incurred in doing that.

Taxpayers will be on the hook for shortfalls, as someone has to bear the risk with downturns in the economy. Sometimes people forget that when we talk about the government paying for something, that's actually the taxpayer paying for something.

At the helm of this administration agency for the ORPP and in control of the pension are individuals with historic ties to political figures. Despite having no experience in pensions, the new CEO will receive a significant bump in pay to set up the flagship pension plan. In addition to his base salary of \$525,000, he will be eligible for an annual performance bonus of an additional \$131,250. Joining him is the new senior vice-president of communications and public affairs at the ORPP Administration Corp., who will be earning \$300,000.

The appointment of these two Liberal insiders, who have a track record of exorbitant salaries, cost overruns and close ties to the Liberal government, does little to quell fears about the efficiency of this organization—there's a \$20-million loan from Ontario taxpayers—and about the estimated \$800 million the ORPP will run up, in its first years, in administrative costs surrounding this pension scheme.

All of this, in an ideal world, would be for nothing. With the federal government and the Ministry of Finance enthusiastically working on a CPP enhancement—the government has continued to make these decisions despite the fact they have kept the door open for the pension plan to be floated in with the CPP as well.

I mentioned the whole issue about the mandatory nature and the fact that we could look at other forms, the PRPP being one. It was three years ago when I brought forward Bill 50, An Act to require the introduction of legislation to allow for pooled registered pension plans. Obviously, as a person with a private member's bill that was picked up in the following budget, I was very pleased to see that.

I think the current government is making a choice in the ORPP that is going to be very costly. The PRPP offers opportunities to businesses and employers, and it is superior in that it enables its members to benefit from the lower administration costs that result from participating in a large, pooled pension plan. It's also portable, so you can move from one employer to another or you can move from one province to another. The investment options within a pooled registered pension plan are similar to those for other registered pension plans so its members can benefit from greater flexibility in managing their savings and meeting their retirement objectives.

A group that represents manufacturers and exporters has approached the government to halt the implementation of its new provisional pension plan until a federal review of the Canada Pension Plan is completed. It harks back to the point I made at the beginning about the coalition of businesses that had asked the government to rethink the ORPP. I was certainly pleased that there was provided a one-year change in the process of bringing the pension plan forward.

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters have been one of the voices that has reported that the costs of administering the Ontario pension plan could be avoided by working with Ottawa.

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The government must realize that manufacturers play a key role in ensuring the strength of the Ontario economy. The request from the CME to wait for a formal review of the CPP expansion makes sense and certainly has been echoed by Ian Howcroft, Ontario's vice-president at the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. Howcroft continued to state that mandatory cost increases put manufacturers at a competitive disadvantage, especially those manufacturers who compete with other jurisdictions. He continued, "Employers already offering pension plans should be exempt from further increases associated with either an ORPP or a CPP change." As I mentioned, it was in February that the current government pushed back the rollout dates to give larger businesses more time to enrol.

Right now, Canada's economy is growing but is weakened by a collapse in commodity prices and a lacklustre global economy. If we look at the information that our Financial Accountability Officer has presented us with, obviously we have a lot of problems and certainly issues that have to be dealt with. I mentioned earlier that we have the largest subnational debt and our interest obligations total \$11.4 billion.

The administration costs of the pension plan are expected to range between \$130 and \$200 per member, per year, so a worker who contributes \$800 per year will lose up to 25% of their contributions off the top in fees alone. That doesn't sound like a very good return on investment to me. Ontarians won't be saving more; they will just be losing more off their payroll stubs.

The Premier has said that a mandatory pension plan will be good for the province, yet recent studies show that 90% of small business owners are opposed to the ORPP. An employee making \$45,000 a year would pay just shy of \$800 toward the ORPP, with their employer contributing an equal amount. While larger businesses may be able to absorb these added costs, smaller businesses will be forced to either reduce the size of their workforce or the hours those employees are able to work.

The creation of an Ontario-only pension plan will risk any immediate and future federal government stimulus in Ontario.

I find it very helpful to examine the impact on the different socio-economic groups. The poor will be squeezed most by a payroll tax as they struggle to make ends meet. Middle-income earners will take home fewer

savings for RRSps, TFSAs, a down payment on a home, mortgage repayment or their children's education. Seniors will never draw a meaningful benefit. As for the well-off, it is hardly a public policy concern if some wealthy people are less affluent in retirement.

But I think we have to understand that there are far more concerns than people have generally recognized in this initiative of the government and the fact that—who does it benefit? Well, it doesn't benefit the poor. It doesn't create more stability for the middle class, who run the risk of clawbacks as well as the poor. As we said, the more affluent—not too many people are going to be concerned about that.

I want to just take a couple of minutes to come back to the term I mentioned, "comparable." The government has made a decision that there are certain pensions in the private sector that they deem comparable. This then has led to another cottage industry, I might say, of the different businesses having to decide what comparable means in their particular position.

To give you one example, a defined contribution pension of 8%, split equally then between the employer and the employee at 4%, may be greater than most pensions—many are at 3% and 3%. An employer has to make a decision, obviously with his employees, if he's going up or he's going down, or opt out into the ORPP where people have no choice and they have no say in what happens to their money. So these are serious questions that people need to understand in understanding how complex this is and what it really means for them.

I want to take the last moment to talk about the groups that came to make submissions to the public hearings. There were nearly 40 different groups that came to the public hearings. But the interesting thing about it was that not one expert testified before the committee who offers a service or competes with other jurisdictions or produces an item or a good—in other words, these are the people who meet payrolls on a regular basis, make sure they're competitive, make sure that they're able to stay in business. Not one of them made any positive comments to support this initiative—not one. No experts who are in the business of meeting a payroll, providing goods and services to the public—not one of them was able to do that. I think that that's something that we also need to think of in a very sobering way.

I want to finish in the last moments that I have and say that my constituents are law-abiding people who work hard and pay the bills. They want to hear a jingle in their pocket, a dream or some hope. They don't want to feel the hand of government reaching deeper into their pockets. They want to be able to make some decision to spend or to save.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to rise today to speak on Bill 186, An Act to establish the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, or the ORPP. As you might be well aware, this is actually the third bill in a series of four to establish the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

The plan was originally proposed to mirror the CPP and to provide security for two thirds of Ontarians without a workplace pension plan. But now, unfortunately, the government's watered down version will provide a pension to those without a workplace pension plan—or not provide a pension at all because so many are going to be excluded on the basis that they have a retirement or pension plan that this government has deemed to be comparable.

Speaker, we're going to get into what happened in committee and delve into what we heard from those who presented or sent in submissions shortly. But, first, I would like to recap why we're even here and why this conversation is so important to have over and over and over again. We're talking about retirement security. We're talking about dignity in retirement, predictability and peace of mind in retirement, and even the ability to retire at all for many people.

People are unable, in today's economy, to keep up with bills, rent, housing, child care, transit and paying for life's unexpected surprises. Mr. Speaker, they say that the things that are sure in this life are death and taxes. Those are the only things that are sure in this life, but I'll add a third. I'd say death, taxes and surprises, because life is full of unexpected surprises, good and bad, but I've learned from personal experience that they're usually expensive. And when there already isn't enough money to make ends meet or get ahead, there certainly isn't any left over for the unexpected. That also means that there isn't money left over for a rainy day or, oftentimes, for retirement.

1700

I understand the need for people to be educated and for increased financial literacy, but it galls me to no end to hear some people's simple solution or simple answer that says that if we just teach people how to save, then we wouldn't be facing this financial savings crisis. That's nonsense. It is never that simple.

People whose only option is precarious, part-time work cobbled together to fill a work week know how to stretch money, but they can't make it out of thin air. This notion that people would be able to save if only they knew how—that's insulting. People who are living hand to mouth often can stretch a dollar farther than some of our colleagues can travel on their vacations, I would wager. But they can't do anything about the unaffordability of skyrocketing hydro bills. They can't do anything about the unaffordability and cost of transit, child care or the lack of affordable housing.

People who are working full-time should be able to make enough money in Ontario to pay for a basic existence—full stop. And that speaks to fair—

Applause.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Full stop.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Full stop, okay. Full stop and clap. Thank you.

That does speak to a fair, dignified living wage as well, which is something that we've talked about often in this House. But it also speaks to the fact that our system

is broken, if someone who works their whole life and contributes to our society then finds themselves at the end of their working years and they are totally unable to stop working because they can't afford to.

Defined benefit pension plans provide the kind of stable and predictable income stream that people need to be able to make plans to participate in their economy. People's needs and lives don't actually stop at retirement. In fact, their needs go up. Their costs increase. Their health care needs increase. They're going to want to continue after retirement to buy food or pay for housing and transportation, maybe even catch a movie once in a while, spoil the grandkids or travel occasionally. They might want to continue to shop at local stores, go to local restaurants, take golf lessons or learn to kayak. They might want to go see a play, but to keep money in their local communities, and they want to feel secure enough, with a confident income stream, to be able to do it. I don't know why this is such a wild notion nowadays. This shouldn't be something that people can't expect.

I promised that we would talk about what happened in committee, so let's do that. I know you've been waiting with bated breath. I want to talk about the committee process. I want to share some of the submissions from groups who want the ORPP to be a strong public pension plan that benefits the most people. They actually don't want a watered down, halfway plan that seeks to appease Bay Street people, who I would say don't give a tinker's cuss about those who struggle in their retirement.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: A tinker's what?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Cuss.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: A tinker's cuss, yes.

Over and over again, we heard from those who want the plan to be the best version it can be to support workers in Ontario. So I'll start first, Mr. Speaker—not just because you're in the chair, but I'll share the remarks to the standing committee regarding Bill 186 from the United Steelworkers. Some highlights:

"The United Steelworkers represents roughly 70,000 workers in Ontario....

"Today, only 40% of Ontarians have workplace pensions. In the private sector, less than 25% of workers have a workplace pension plan. Reliance on private savings to fill the gap is falling short, which is why the initiative to have a government sponsored retirement option is timely and necessary....

"If no national consensus on CPP enhancement is reached, we feel that retirement security can be strengthened in Ontario through the ORPP. We are disappointed, however, that the design and implementation of the ORPP eschews the principle of universal coverage and we fear that Ontario's actions will undermine universal expansion of CPP going forward....

"Ontario should amend Bill 186 to expand coverage of the ORPP to all workers."

They continue: "First, universal coverage would enhance retirement benefits for ORPP members through increased portability of benefits. Trends in job turnover rates show that workers will have an average of about five employers over their working life. Universal cover-

age would mean that workers' earnings in all of their jobs would be covered by the ORPP. Indeed, seamless portability is one of the most efficient and equitable aspects of the CPP design.

"Universal coverage would also reduce administrative complexity both for employers and the plan itself because the rules and administration would more closely mirror the CPP. Universality would spread investment and longevity risk which would enable the ORPP to better predict the plans, contributions and benefits. Expanding the ORPP to cover all workers would also provide more flexibility for existing pension plans."

The last little bit from the Steelworkers: "From our perspective, the real reason for exempting comparable plans is pressure from the entrenched financial services industry. We urge the government to reconsider these exemptions and, at the very least, rebuff pressure from the financial services industry to expand these exemptions to include pooled retirement pension plans or other inferior financial products."

Mr. Speaker, a little bit about universality: The strength of a pension is in its size. The more people contributing to the pool, the larger the pool and the greater the money in the pool that is able to grow and ultimately provide the most benefit to the most people in retirement.

Our strong public systems should be universal, be it health care or a strong public pension plan. It comes down to fairness and equity but also about strength and shared benefit. Universal programs underscore the importance of shared values and benefits across the province and, really, across the country.

Because I know you've been waiting for this, I have another submission that I'd like to share. These are a couple of highlights from Unifor in their submission to the standing committee. They say: "The workplace is changing. Fewer Ontarians today can expect to stay with one employer and collect a pension plan from that employer at the end of their work career. Instead, employees will have numerous employers and retire with a piecemeal of retirement savings accounts. Their savings accounts will be transferred to their bank and subject to expensive retail banking fees. The growth in precarious work means no pension for too many workers, especially young workers and immigrant workers.

"Workers today can no longer rely on employers for retirement security. Individuals, particularly low- and middle-income earners, are not well equipped to deal with the risks in saving for retirement. The financial institutions have not come up with an effective retirement savings product."

The Ontario Regional Council "holds the ORPP as a necessary plan should the CPP enhancement be delayed or fail....

"Universality is essential to an efficient, cost-effective, smoothly administered plan. Already we are seeing the complexities that arise when employers with comparable plans are exempt from the ORPP. There will be a cost to review and to enforce the comparable plan exemption; there is also the potential for Ontarians to lose their

entitlement to ORPP benefits if the comparable plan exemption is not properly administered.

"Our preference is for a universal ORPP."

I have another one for us. This is from CUPE, and this is part of their submission on Bill 186: "It will come as no surprise that CUPE Ontario does not support certain elements of the current design of the ORPP. We are absolutely supportive of the fact that the ORPP is a defined benefit plan, which provides the greatest income security for workers. The most significant problem, however, is the fact that the ORPP is not universal...."

"In the absence of an expanded CPP, there is room for a provincially based program with the important proviso that it be possible to fully and seamlessly integrate a provincial pension with the existing CPP if and when the national public pension is eventually expanded...."

"The ORPP should not be created in a way that would prevent universal expansion of the CPP. Nor should the ORPP be used as a tool to shape a CPP expansion that has non-universal elements to it...."

"Universality is the single most effective way to build long-term, broadly based support for a social program like a public pension. It also reduces the potential for opposition to such programs because everyone is seen to gain a benefit from them. Universality is also the most viable model for a public pension. It provides the largest pool of resources and the simplest structure. Carving some workers out of the ORPP will mean a less efficient plan, with more resources dedicated to administration costs, including the cost of enforcement. The universality of the CPP bears this out. It was virtually the only contributory pension plan not subject to political attack since the most recent financial crisis."

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One more—oh, good. This is from the OFL, a submission to the standing committee, also on Bill 186. This one is short—short and sweet:

"Universality of the ORPP is the key feature and primary factor that will deliver improved retirement security to Ontario workers."

"Developing 'carve-outs' in the form of comparable plan exemptions is fraught with complexity, adds increased costs associated with plan reviews, unnecessary enforcement and excessive administrative pressure in determining exactly what denotes a comparable plan."

"The OFL is steadfast in our insistence that the ORPP be universal."

Mr. Speaker, are you getting the theme? It is indeed universality.

However, when presented with actuarial analyses, principled arguments, and clear and measured historical examples of the success and positives of universality, this government just kind of ignored and disregarded that. In the face of all of this evidence of why this would be the best plan going forward, they are knowingly creating administrative challenges and designing the opportunity for employers to undermine the effectiveness of the plan and thereby the future benefit and stability for their employees. That's absurd, but that's maybe just from where I sat at committee.

I have another piece of a submission here. This, however, is in support of defined benefit plans and why it's so important to recognize a defined, steady benefit.

This is from OPTrust: "We strongly believe in the value offered by the defined benefit pension model and its ability to provide adequate replacement income in retirement. There is no doubt that Bill 186 is timely legislation. Increasingly, small and medium-sized employers are abandoning workplace pension plans. Larger employers are turning from defined benefit to defined contribution pension plans, shifting the responsibility to employees to make investment decisions they may not be equipped to make."

I'm also going to take a moment and share some thoughts from Hugh Mackenzie.

First, I realize that I'm using other people's words here, and I have the opportunity to share my thoughts in this debate. But we hear from the government that they have consulted extensively, and I'm sure that that is true. However, when they take the opportunity to share some of the opinions of those with whom they have extensively consulted, it's always glowing. I wanted to take the opportunity to say that these are groups that represent a number of plan members, workers across the province. They support a strong public pension plan, but they are making suggestions, real suggestions, on how to improve this and make it the best plan, and it's just totally unheeded and completely disregarded, and it's very frustrating.

Anyway, here is one more submission, from Hugh Mackenzie and Associates, economic consultants. He has been involved with the pension system in Canada for more than 30 years, incidentally.

Mr. Wayne Gates: That's a long time.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: A very long time. This is a man who knows about pensions.

He has said, "Canadian workers need an expanded public pension system to support their retirement income needs."

"Ideally, that would take the form of a meaningfully expanded Canada Pension Plan."

"The ORPP is a second best."

"Having said that, I want to address two issues which, if dealt with, would not only make the ORPP better but would give us a plan that could be easily integrated into a future CPP expansion—universal coverage and portability ... universal coverage as a fundamental principle for the design of the ORPP. Despite this principle, apparently persuaded by current pension plans' concerns about the complexity of integrating their plans with the ORPP, the government decided to exempt what would be deemed to be 'equivalent plans.'"

"While I don't agree with the government's decision, I at least understand the logic behind enabling DB plan sponsors to avoid the complexity of integration. But in a bizarre and illogical move—I'm going to read that again, just because I like that line. He says, "But in a bizarre and illogical move, the government decided to extend its 'equivalent plan' exemption to DC plans with a total contribution rate of 8% of earnings or more...."

"The exemption"—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Good line.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Oh, it was a great line.

But he goes on; there's more: "The exemption for those 'equivalent' plans makes no sense. For a DC plan, accommodation of the ORPP is breathtakingly simple. A DC plan sponsor who wishes to avoid an increase in costs can do so simply by reducing employee and employer contributions to the DC plan by 1.9% of pay. Not only that, this would be one of those rare instances in employment relations in which the employees are unquestionably better off, and employers are no worse off. Employees get a significantly better benefit for the same cost; and employers' costs remain the same.

"In my view, it is difficult to justify not eliminating the equivalent plan exemption for DC plans. It is even harder to justify a system which, as it currently stands, allows DC plan sponsors to keep their employees out of the ORPP without their consent.

"On this issue, my specific recommendation to the committee is that it amend Bill 186 to remove any reference to the granting of 'equivalent plan' status to DC plans," hear ye, hear ye.

Mr. Wayne Gates: What was that?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: "A bizarre and illogical move"; that's what it was.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the committee process—I appreciate what it could be; I get frustrated by how it plays out. But I very much valued the input from those in the know.

During clause-by-clause consideration, which is, you are well aware, when we take a look at all of the proposed amendments and the government shoots them all down—I beg your pardon: the opposition amendments.

What we did as the NDP was put forward amendments that reflected the input of those who weren't just in earnest—they are the experts; they know what they're talking about. We put forward amendments on their behalf. We tried to take this pension plan back to the strongest version it could have been, to make it universal by, as we have been asked to do, scrapping any references to comparable and exempt plans. However, as I'm sure you've guessed, the Liberals weren't having it. They've obviously already made their commitments to Bay Street.

We wanted the maximum number of people to be in the plan. That was the goal. Every Ontarian should be given the opportunity to retire with dignity. However, since this government was not willing to abandon their comparability framework, we fought for amendments that would make it so that any plan that was not defined benefit, or DB, could not qualify to be considered exempt—because they aren't comparable.

The government stuck to their message of flexibility. We heard the word "flexibility" over and over. I will say that I thought it was ridiculous, because what we should have been arguing for was stability and predictability, not flexibility. For predictability and security: That's what we should have been arguing for.

We're talking about income in retirement. We're talking about benefits in retirement. This government is

willing to introduce flux and instability and, as they said ad nauseam in committee, flexibility. You know what? This is my own interpretation, but I think "flexibility" is Lib-speak for the ability to create loopholes and workarounds to make their friends happy. This has nothing to do with benefiting Ontarians.

DC plans should not be considered comparable. There are good DC plans out there, but even the good ones do not provide a steady, guaranteed stream of retirement income, and therefore they cannot provide the stable benefit of a defined benefit plan. They aren't comparable. They aren't DB plans, so they shouldn't be considered comparable.

We also brought forward an amendment about multi-employer pension plans. These plans can be DB or DC plans, or a combination. The benefits are a target; they aren't fixed. They're not guaranteed; they could be reduced. Clearly, they shouldn't be considered comparable and, therefore, exempt—also an amendment that was shot down.

This government is leaving so many significant details to regulation. Here in this Legislature, we have debate—sometimes worthwhile, but we have the opportunity to weigh in and to bring voices from our communities. We have debate. We have committee. Sometimes, that process seems futile, but it still is an open process that the public can access.

1720

But when it comes to regulation, these are decisions and details that will not be hammered out and worked out in debate or in committee. They will be made potentially in backrooms or at kitchen tables—I don't know—with napkins. I have no idea with this government. But we will never know, because it's not part of the open public process. It isn't subject to public input or scrutiny.

Now, we agree with leaving the fine-tuning and small details to regulation. We don't have to hash out every single detail in every single piece of legislation. But when it comes to the important pieces, the broad strokes, that should not be done on napkins at kitchen tables. Anyway, I'll move on.

PRPPs, or pooled registered pension plans: You might remember hearing about them. In fact, there were members of this House who supported them. However, these are investment vehicles; they aren't pensions. We've fought this out in debate already. PRPPs, while approved in legislation, don't exist yet. They aren't a thing. They don't exist yet in Ontario, and already this government is saying that they can be considered comparable and therefore exempt.

I just don't have words sometimes: They don't even exist, but they already can be considered comparable and therefore exempt. They are similar to DC plans, but they go one step further: Employer contributions are not mandatory. If employer contributions are not mandatory, how on earth is that a pension? It isn't. Therefore, how can it be considered comparable? It shouldn't.

Mr. Speaker, secure retirement is not going to be through Harper-style PRPPs, which have significantly

expensive administration fees that benefit insurance companies and banks more than retirees. Like I said, we already had this fight in debate, but here we are again.

The government goal should be for the secure and predictable benefit of future plan members, not buddies of the financial elite. And it shouldn't matter who is related to whom. It just shouldn't.

We also put forward an amendment to revert the maximum pensionable earnings back to what the government had initially committed. They had originally said \$90,000 in 2014 dollars instead of 2017. Basically, back in August 2015, the government said the calculation of pension benefits was said to be based on a maximum of \$90,000 in 2014 dollars—which, by the way, if they had stuck to that, would have been nearly \$93,000 in 2017 dollars. They changed the year to 2017 dollars. It just shaves a little money off of the future benefits right out of the gate—or, actually, because we're not out of the gate, before we even get out of the gate.

During committee—we had this conversation in committee—they had the audacity to say it would have a “small impact,” not a “meaningful impact,” and that they’ve “consulted extensively.” Well, Speaker, I highly suspect that no future retiree was consulted, that there was no one who said, “Sure. Go ahead. Tweak the numbers to sneak a little off the top of my future benefits. Shave a little off now to limit the growth potential along the way, so that I'll never miss out on what I couldn't earn, because this government felt the need to manipulate my future benefits.”

It's just by a smidgen, but I'm sure you'll agree that there's no way that future retirees would say “Sure. Your sneaky manipulation isn't going to have a meaningful impact, so go ahead.” No. It's just one more example of just a little fine-tuning, but not for the benefit of Ontarians.

Our goal should be for a strong, public, universal pension plan. We should be looking at ways to make it better, stronger, of more benefit; this government has chosen not to. I will never understand how this government can be so short-sighted, especially when we're talking about a program that is designed for the long haul. This is a long-range plan, one of the precious few that I have seen since being elected. It is a long-range plan to benefit people in the long term, but somehow this Liberal government has managed to find ways to shortchange Ontarians before we even get started.

However, Mr. Speaker, there is still time to make it better. We will be back for the fourth piece of ORPP legislation sometime soon. We can look forward to having this conversation all over again, because pensions and pension security, retirement security, is always going to be a very important topic that we need to focus on—keep having these conversations, and bring more of the public into them and, hopefully, hold this government to account so that we ultimately end up with the strongest and best public pension plan we could.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim McDonell): Further debate?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's a pleasure to rise today on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge to add a few comments to the debate regarding Bill 186. As the minister said earlier, I was able to work along with the Associate Minister of Finance and sit in on the committee to take it through clause-by-clause. So I'm very happy to stand up today to talk about Bill 186.

As we've heard before, this government made the ORPP one of the pillars of our economic plan because we believe that every worker deserves to have a secure retirement and that the ORPP will help to close the retirement savings gap for the two thirds of Ontario employees who don't have a workplace pension plan.

It's interesting, Speaker. There are many families that face unforeseen circumstances. The best planning in the world, and the best savings plan in the world, sometimes don't account for a sudden catastrophic illness or catastrophic injury, where their future has changed and they're unable to continue to save for retirement—job losses, children's illness.

One of my patients who I worked with fairly closely in a community many, many years ago was a woman who had a very good job. She had no family, so she was on her own. She had a very, very good job and ended up with a long-term chronic illness, and she was unable to continue to work. She ended up in poverty in older adulthood, without a secure retirement plan.

As her nurse, I was trying to assist her into what living circumstances she could afford to go into. She could probably have managed in a retirement home with a little bit of help, but she was unable to pay for that. It was a sad situation, and it made me realize how important it is to ensure that everybody has a secure retirement.

There is a great economic benefit to ensuring that people are retiring with enough savings to manage right until the end of their life, to ensure they've got the things that they need. That contributes billions to our economy. The cost of doing nothing will be that lost revenue, and it ends up that that is a burden on our society, as taxpayers, when we have to support those folks.

I wanted to take just a couple of moments to talk about comparable plans.

I know that there have been some comments in the House about universality. I know that our Associate Minister of Finance did a lot of consultations around Ontario. She was in Cambridge for a first consultation and then she came back to sit with our chamber of commerce for a round table, for a question-and-answer, regarding retirement security.

The government previously outlined, Ontario workers participating in comparable plans will be exempt from participating in the ORPP. That came from our extensive consultations a lot. There are many workplace pension plans that were comparable to or better than the ORPP, and these employers wanted the flexibility built into the plan to ensure that they were able to continue to offer a superior pension plan, they thought, to their employees. So that is built into Bill 186. Anyway, we made the decision and we will be continuing to work with the

companies as we go forward, to test that comparability into future plans.

I just wanted to wrap up, Mr. Speaker, and say that I was very, very happy to see this file go forward. To add the comments to third reading of the ORRP is a real privilege. I think that it really does build on retirement savings for many people in my community of Cambridge. I'm very, very happy to see this going forward, and I really commend the Associate Minister of Finance for the work that she has done on her file.

1730

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to join the debate today on Bill 186, strengthening retirement security—third reading for this bill.

I do want to thank the member from Oshawa. I think she gave a very compelling blow-by-blow account of what happened at committee. I had the great fortune—or misfortune, depending on how you see it—to chair that meeting, and some of those amendments that came forward.

Quite honestly, the debate on pensions, and the integrity of those pensions, in the province of Ontario has been watered down to a level that will not serve the people of this province. I want to tell you a little bit of why I'm saying that.

Several members from the government side of the House have gotten up and they have said that the people of this province aren't going to be able to manage savings in the future; they're not going to be able to put that money aside and ensure that economic security is a reality for them in the future—and I want to tell you why.

Obviously, we support a provincial pension plan, but we support a universal pension plan, which this is not.

There was a motion in a private member's bill that came to the floor of this Legislature back in 2010. It was brought forward by our leader, Andrea Horwath, who made this proposal almost six years ago now, Mr. Speaker. At that time, the Liberal government did not support us.

Instead, we have a revised, modernized, reformatted, broadened definition of an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, which I think the member from Oshawa has accurately described as something that is not universal. The entire goal of bringing forward a pension plan for the province of Ontario would be to ensure that it encompasses the workers in this province.

There are two issues at play here today at the third reading of this important piece of legislation. One is that the state of employment in the province of Ontario, the new reality for workers of all ages in the province of Ontario right now, is precarious, part-time, contract work and not a livable wage of a \$15 minimum wage, which we have proposed. Especially in the city of Toronto, it's quite interesting, Mr. Speaker. Also, something that a lot of people don't know—and I think it's important for the people of this House to hear—is the state of a lack of stable work in the public sector.

There's this one article from 2015: "Public Sector Workers Feel Sting of Precarious Jobs, Data Shows."

There used to be a time in this province and in this country when the service of people who worked in the public sector was valued. There used to be a time. I know that because in my office there is a certificate, signed by Brian Mulroney, to my father-in-law, Walter, for 31 years of service in the national defence department. It's a certificate signed by a Conservative Prime Minister. It's right in my office. Actually, that used to be the reality. To enter the public service used to be thought of as a way to not only demonstrate your values and your principles as a worker, but on the other side of the coin, you were recognized as someone who was building a province up, or building a country up, and doing good in the province of Ontario.

But in today's Ontario, for those people who are trying to save for a long-term pension, long-term savings, it's quite astounding.

This article goes on to say, "Despite its vow to tackle precarious employment, almost half of the Ontario government's own job postings last year were for temporary positions, data obtained by the Star shows."

"In a province where around one third of all jobs are insecure, a full 44% of the 10,682 jobs posted and filled at Ontario ministries" around 2014 "were temporary or seasonal, according to documents accessed through a freedom-of-information request. Those figures exclude student summer jobs."

Some people say, "Well, it's okay. Students don't have to work full-time." We have the highest post-secondary education rates in the province of Ontario, but they don't need full-time work.

You'll be interested to hear this, Mr. Speaker: Six ministries hired more temporary than permanent employees last year, including correctional services; community and social services—which has its own set of problems, we know that; and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. It is despicable that a ministry which is responsible for training our future workers in the province of Ontario who contribute to our economy is part of the problem. Of the 300 job postings for provincial correctional officers, not a single position was permanent.

This is the reality of the province of Ontario. So what does this government do? It brings in—you could describe it as a pseudo Ontario retirement pension plan. When they first started this plan and when they first sold it to the people of this province and when they first ran on it in the election, the language around it was really quite strong. The language at the time was that every employee in the province of Ontario would be part of this Ontario Retirement Pension Plan—this was in August 2015, and they were very clear—or a comparable workplace pension plan. We should have recognized at the time that little loophole, the little get-out-of-jail-free card that was there.

Then they changed it in January 2016 to "every eligible employee." So the ground is always moving on this pension plan. The legislation confirms that a number of groups will have neither a workplace pension nor be

part of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan going forward. To her credit, the member from Oshawa fought hard at committee to hold the government to account and to try to hold the line on who would be eligible for this pension plan, because this is the reality for people in the province of Ontario.

The suggested definition of employee that would be broad enough to make it clear that many different types of workers will be able to participate, such as part-time, seasonal, temporary, contract, federally regulated employees and self-employed workers—a lot of people don't understand that federal employees wouldn't qualify as well.

The province of Ontario right now is not a friendly place for an average worker. It truly is not.

We actually had a really important debate at our provincial council this last weekend, because it's very much tied to this so-called sharing economy, which really is not about sharing anything. The sharing economy is a by-product of precarious, contract, temporary work. The people who are entering the sharing economy are not true entrepreneurs; they are people who are trying to survive an employment reality in the province of Ontario which is hostile, where the employers win every single day despite the review of the Employment Standards Act.

Just on the issue of the rights of workers in the province of Ontario, there is a reason why there were a thousand people out on the front lawn of this Legislature today fighting for their rights as workers. One of the speakers today said, "When people get injured on their jobs, there are very few options for them." Even the option that exists for them, which is WSIB, is not a good option.

Last night, I met with the folks that travelled 600 kilometres by bike. They were going to camp out on the front lawn of Queen's Park—God love them—and they were there to tell us the reality of what they experience as workers when they are injured. Never mind getting a job, keeping a job, staying safe on a job; they wanted to tell us how hard it was to fight for their rights as employees even when they contributed to WSIB and even when the law says that they have certain rights when they are hurt or injured in the workplace. There's a reason why they travelled 600 kilometres and told us their story. It's because that system is a broken system. It is broken.

The fellow that I did speak to who lost his leg at the work site has had to consistently fight for his rights to maintain those disability payments. That's heartbreaking. People do not choose to be injured on the work site. They don't go to work one day and say, "You know what? I'm just going to get injured today and then fight with WSIB for the rest of my days." This is not a conscious decision.

You put that into the reality of what the province of Ontario is today, where you have people working multiple jobs to make ends meet. You have contract workers who are genuinely afraid to speak out, in a culture of fear, when they are faced with unsafe working conditions. You have people who work full-time and still

cannot pay their bills because this province still does not have a living wage. These are predominantly women and they are predominantly from marginalized communities. These are vulnerable workers. You stick that into this context of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan—we talk about comparability—and you look at all the ways that this government has wiggled out of the integrity of the true intention of what a true universal pension plan should be for the people of this province, and you have what we have before us today, which is a flawed piece of legislation which will not help people save for the future.

As we have heard from very small businesses—because there has been a lack of clarity. Businesses have been very clear with us, especially through the budget committee. They want to know the rules of engagement, and they need those rules so that they can plan.

I'll leave you with this one thing, just as a final thank-you to the critic from Oshawa, who tried to amend this piece of legislation. New Democrats tried to make it stronger. We fought hard at committee to try to build some integrity into this piece of legislation.

This is from GENMO. This goes back to the private member's bill from the member from Oshawa. It says, "While governments at all levels discuss and debate the need to provide improved income security for seniors the focus is on ... pooled registered pension plans, ORPP, enhanced CPP. Meanwhile, the 1.5 million Canadian families who are dependent on their private defined benefit pension plan are left exposed to potential financial disaster."

You have a piece of legislation which is weak and you have a plan going forward which leaves workers at risk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Seeing none, Ms. Hunter has moved third reading of Bill 186, An Act to establish the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

Those opposed, say "nay."

I believe the nays have it.

This will be a five-minute bell. Call in the members.

We have a deferral. Pursuant to standing order 28(h), this will be dealt with after question period tomorrow.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je propose l'ajournement des débats de la Chambre.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I believe she tried to trick me, but I believe that was adjournment of the House.

The minister has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1744.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
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Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
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Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
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Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
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Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

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Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
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Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
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Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
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Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
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Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
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Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
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Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
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Soo Wong
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Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Peter Z. Milczyn, Julia Munro
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Joe Dickson, Jennifer K. French
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Bill Walker
Jeff Yurek
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la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
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**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 2 June 2016

Jeudi 2 juin 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 2 June 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 2 juin 2016

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice with respect to a private member's public bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated Monday, May 30, 2016, the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet at 12:40 p.m. on Thursday, June 2, 2016, for the purpose of a presentation from the family of Rowan Stringer for up to 10 minutes, followed by nine minutes of questions divided equally between the three caucuses.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that notwithstanding the order of the House dated—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispensed. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENERGY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT DES LOIS SUR L'ÉNERGIE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 12, 2016, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning / *Projet de loi 135, Loi modifiant plusieurs lois et abrogeant plusieurs règlements en ce qui concerne la conservation de l'énergie et la planification énergétique à long terme.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I rise in the Legislature today to speak to Bill 135, the Energy Statute Law Amendment

Act. What's clear is that across the province, families are struggling to make ends meet, yet Ontario ratepayers continue to see unaffordable increases to their hydro bills. There's nowhere in North America where energy rates have risen like they have in Ontario over the past few years. While the Liberals would rather blame this rate increase on the weather, it's clear this is a direct result of years of scandal, waste and mismanagement in the energy sector. Companies see rates as a barrier to doing business in the province, and average Ontario families continue to struggle to pay their hydro bills.

With respect to electricity, the main issue with this bill is that it removes the autonomy of the Independent Electricity System Operator. The bill centralizes all transmission and electricity sector planning with the minister's political staff and cabinet, thereby overriding the industry experts at the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Energy Board.

When it comes to choosing what is best for the province and the electricity system within it, that decision will be made with a partisan and political lens. Building power lines to the north could easily be vetoed by a desire to bring in hydroelectric-generated power from Quebec. Clearly, energy is a necessity of life, and the Liberal government should not be able to dangle needed electricity projects that would improve affordability and reliability in front of certain ridings come election time to secure victory. We should do what's best for the province, not what's best for the Liberal government.

By making the Independent Electricity System Operator bend to the will of the cabinet, the political goals may differ from what is needed on more than just transmission. Essentially, the minister or the government can create whatever policy they like, on whichever grounds they like. That is hardly a stable system that acts in the best interests of all Ontarians.

The Independent Electricity System Operator does not have the ability to object to any of the directives or targets that are given by the ministry, even if functionally impossible. They are forced to create an implementation plan that the minister can alter or outright reject until he or she is satisfied. Again, Speaker, the Independent Electricity System Operator cannot reasonably object to any project.

Further, there is no requirement for the minister to hold consultations with Ontarians or people within the energy sector. The bill only suggests that the minister must consult with "groups that the minister considers appropriate given the matters being addressed by the long-term energy plan." Even if the government does

consult these groups, they're under no obligation to act on their advice. They are only legislatively required to "consider the results of such consultation." Since cabinet and the minister write and approve the long-term energy plan, none of the documentation rationalizing any of the plans will be made public.

In addition, because the Ontario Energy Board and the Independent Electricity System Operator are no longer allowed to hold hearings or raise opposition to any plans put forward by the government, the technical analysis regarding cost to impact on energy supply will not be brought forward. This means that if the government wants to move ahead with an expensive transmission project, they can put the entire cost onto the rate base without any objection from any entity.

The government can also do this even if the project is not needed in the first place. For example, the Caledonia power line, which does not connect to the grid, was built even with objections and analysis from the Ontario Energy Board. Speaker, imagine what kinds of decisions will be made if no objections or analysis are ever required.

However, the changes to the Ontario Energy Board Act and the Electricity Act are not the only problems with the bill. This bill will also allow the government to quietly enact home energy audits through changes to the Green Energy Act and the proclamation of past sections of that act. The bill also leaves the door open to applying these mandatory audits to businesses, as well.

This government has shown, time and time again, that it can't get anything right, and that it's not concerned with what is best for Ontarians. It is only concerned with its own political survival.

As I said at the outset of my remarks, I'll be opposing this bill. This bill does nothing to combat skyrocketing energy prices. In fact, this government doesn't appear to have any plan to do that. Instead, this bill seeks to give broad, new powers to the minister.

On energy, this government continues to show that it just doesn't get it. When they're not talking about banning natural gas, they're talking about selling Hydro One. This Liberal government's energy policies are not only hurting ratepayers; they are seriously damaging our economy and businesses.

My colleagues and I continue to question the government on hydro-related issues, and we'll continue to do that. In fact, we called for specific action to be reflected in this year's budget, which included a viable plan to deal with rising energy costs. Instead, the Liberal government put forward a budget full of tax increases and limited funding that will do nothing to ease the pressures of life on my constituents in Whitby-Oshawa.

Governing is about priorities. It is clear that this government is more concerned about banning natural gas than putting in place policies that make hydro affordable for Ontarians. I want to take the opportunity to assure Ontarians that we will continue to stand up for ratepayers in this province while the clock runs out on a government whose moment has come and gone.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France G  linas: I, too, will be opposing this bill, which basically takes any third-party, independent responsibility for planning electricity structure completely away. Whether we talk about the IESO or we talk about the OEB, they will become implementation instruments of the government. They will not be in charge of planning our electricity structure like we wanted it to be, like we have been doing since 2004 or should have been doing since 2004.

0910

I have a letter here that is signed by Mayor Brian Bigger, who is the mayor of the city of Greater Sudbury. He goes on to criticize this government. He has written to the Honourable Bob Chiarelli. He talks about his meeting. Basically, in Sudbury, in the city of Greater Sudbury, there is Greater Sudbury Utilities, and then 30,000 people who live in the city of Greater Sudbury are serviced by Hydro One. What the city of Greater Sudbury wanted to do was quite simple: It was to purchase the assets of Hydro One so that everybody in Sudbury would pay the same hydro rate under Greater Sudbury Utilities. You figure that could be possible, Madam Speaker? Absolutely not. The government was so bound and determined that they were going to sell off Hydro One to the highest bidder so that they could bring money in that they failed to take, basically, an equitable view of the taxpayers of Sudbury and the ratepayers of Sudbury. So Greater Sudbury Utilities was never able to have a truthful conversation so that everybody in Sudbury would be covered by Greater Sudbury Utilities. Instead, half of us use Hydro One and pay through the roof.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I listened to the interesting points made by the member from Whitby-Oshawa. Sometimes it's hard to face reality. The reality is that in this province, we have a very comprehensive energy supply system that is not cheap; it is not free. It takes hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars to keep our energy supply available. Look at what is going to be required to refurbish Darlington, the Bruce Power cost. These are billions of dollars that are needed to invest in our energy sources, whether it be nuclear, whether it be natural gas, whether it be hydroelectric.

The other parties think that somehow this is done for free, that somehow we get this magical power when we turn on the light switch in our homes. It is an incredible investment that we've made in this province, and it is really illusionary to think that somehow you can freeze hydro rates, as the former Conservative Party did. I remember in 2003, we had a massive blackout. I remember standing at the corner of Avenue Road and Eglinton directing traffic because the Conservative government didn't invest in energy supply. So whether it's the natural gas we're investing in, whether it's nuclear we're investing in, you can't have a free lunch.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Point of order, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member on a point of order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The member, under standing order 23, is definitely impugning the motives of other members, and he is falsifying history. And he's—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order. That's not a point of order.

Further questions and comments? I'm going to the member from York-Simcoe.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker—

Mr. Mike Colle: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member from Eglinton-Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: I had 15 seconds left. The member from Pembroke stood up and took my time because he disagreed with what I said. That should not be in order.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): That's not a point of order.

I'm going to turn to the member from York-Simcoe.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I want to make a couple of comments on the response by the member for Whitby-Oshawa. I think that one of the key issues he identified that we feel very strongly about is the question of where the decisions are being made, the concentration of decision-making by the political side of the equation when in fact it should be that the planning is based on engineering and on science, on best practices and the kinds of things that stand up to public scrutiny and transparency. That is the key to good decision-making, not ones where you are legislated an avenue into a minister's office, as opposed to the engineering work that's done before decisions are made. That is the problem.

Of course, if we look at the cost of hydro, it is out of control. It is not competitive. It acts as a deterrent for investment and for job creation. Those are the kinds of things that we on this side feel are the most important. This bill falls short of providing that kind of transparency that taxpayers need.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to have a few moments. I will be getting up on my portion of the debate shortly after the member finishes up his own portion.

It's been lively in here already this morning. That's because this is a hot topic in the province of Ontario. The people of my riding and, quite frankly, people wherever I travel within this province—this is one of the first issues out of their mouths: the price of hydro in the province of Ontario and the concerns that brings upon a family.

The members talked about blackouts that happened in 2002. Well, we have blackouts that are happening today. They may not be off-the-grid blackouts, but they're blackouts because people can't afford to pay their bills. That's a concern. When we talk about dollars and the costs that go into producing a hydro system in the province of Ontario, how about the wasted dollars that they put into that energy file in this province?

I'll be happy to go further into those things in my portion of the debate. It's definitely something that needs

to be highlighted in this House. People on the other side of the bench—the government—need to get it. I think these new members—I'm not sure what they talk to their constituents about, but when my constituents come and talk to me, it's about how they can't afford any higher hydro costs, that there isn't any more money in their budget, that they struggle to turn the lights on and they struggle to heat their homes. And it's not necessarily electric heat. It's just keeping the lights on, keeping the house warm. Making sure there's enough food on the table these days is a struggling attempt for many people in this province.

So for the member opposite to be talking about "it costs a lot of money for the energy file," I think he'd better look at his own back door and see really where the money has been spent on the energy file.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Whitby-Oshawa to wrap up.

Mr. Lorne Coe: It's a pleasure to sum up. I thank the members on both sides of the Legislature for their comments, which are always constructive. A lot of passion is presented in each of those commentaries.

Again, we still have across this province, as you know, Speaker, families who are struggling to make ends meet. I have those discussions on a regular basis with constituents whom I represent in Whitby-Oshawa.

In those discussions, it's not only families who tell me that it's a struggle to make ends meet; it's local businesses as well. I recently met with some members of the Whitby Chamber of Commerce and the Oshawa chamber of commerce, and they told me that it's really a struggle, given the unaffordable increases that they're trying to deal with overall.

They also spoke specifically to the energy rates and how high they've risen over the years here in Ontario. They just see it as an impediment to succeeding with their businesses and creating jobs here locally. Those companies see the rates as a barrier to even expanding their businesses as well. In summary, I think that there are a lot of challenges within this bill.

Another aspect that constituents tell me they'd like to see more of as we move ahead is consultation. We know that the best outcomes of bills and legislative frameworks is consultation—broad consultation—so that people have a very good understanding and they can provide their direct input about what's best for the province and what's best for their respective communities.

Speaker, I appreciate very much your time and patience in terms of the discussion of this bill this morning.

0920

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this bill, the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act, on behalf of the people of Hamilton Mountain, people who, by the way, have a lot to say to me about this government and the way it handles our energy file. They have a lot to say, Speaker, and I have a lot to say, and I have to warn the government now that

none of it is going to be positive, as this bill does nothing to make people feel better.

The most common complaint I hear is about the ever-increasing cost of hydro in the province of Ontario. I hear it from families who are furious that their hydro bills are going through the roof. Prices went up by 80% between 2004 and 2014, and they're still going up. One constituent called to tell me what he had done, which he thought was a very wise approach: conservation. Quite frankly, I agreed with him, thinking that conservation was the right way to go. Then he continued to tell me the rest of his story. He managed to conserve so well that his usage went down to zero kilowatt hours, but he still received a bill for delivery charges. It just infuriated him that he had to pay those charges.

I hear from businesses that tell me about skyrocketing hydro bills and how they're making it really hard to survive. We know that businesses are failing, thanks to energy costs. When my colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane spoke to this bill, he told us about businesses in his riding in the north that use a lot of energy, and they actually find it cheaper to run diesel generation than use electricity. That's incredible. One of the biggest selling points for electric cars these days is their much lower fuel costs, but diesel generators can be cheaper than electricity coming from the grid. What sort of energy system allows this to happen? People are angry about what they have to pay for electricity, and so they should be.

They're also angry that this government is selling Hydro One, because they know that it will only add to what they have to pay. They know that privatization will mean higher bills than they're already paying. They know that they didn't ask for it, and they know that they never gave anyone permission to sell it. After all, Hydro One belongs to the people of Ontario—public not private. But this Liberal government comes along and says, "Too bad. We're selling it. It's gone. We're selling your property." And they're allowed to get away with it.

So here we have a public utility that built Ontario over the past 110 years or so and a grid that has spread its tentacles throughout Ontario and facilitated the growth of a manufacturing economy, and was, quite frankly, the envy of the world. But what has this government done with that? Well, let's listen to what the Auditor General had to say, because she had quite a bit to say about this in her report last year when she spoke about electricity planning in Ontario.

She noted that determining future electricity demands requires a huge amount of technical planning, and that this was reflected in the 2004 amendments to the Electricity Act, which required "the Ontario Power Authority ... to conduct independent planning and prepare an 'Integrated Power System Plan.'" The Ontario Energy Board was "to review and approve the technical plan" so that the interest of consumers would be protected. That was how electricity planning was supposed to be conducted in Ontario, according to the 2004 amendments.

Sadly, that isn't the case. As the Auditor General says, "Over the last decade, this power system planning pro-

cess has essentially broken down, and Ontario's energy system has not had a technical plan in place for the last 10 years. Operating outside the checks and balances of the legislated planning process, the Ministry of Energy has made a number of decisions about power generation that have resulted in significant costs to electricity consumers."

She also pointed out that although the OPA developed the technical plans—one in 2007 and one in 2011—neither went forward. Instead, the ministry published its long-term energy plan, a shorter, more policy-oriented document. The Auditor General noted several problems with this plan, what she called their policy plan, and that it had no cost-benefit analysis or other alternatives.

There's a lack of transparency. Consumers are not being informed of the reasons behind the rising electricity costs. She questioned the stakeholder consultation process, and with good reason: After a two-month consultation process, the ministry couldn't provide her with a summary of the responses that they received. The plan was released just five days after the consultation period ended. I think that any reasonable person would agree that's not enough time to digest the consultation and incorporate the input into the plan.

That's a pattern that we've seen over and over and over again with this government. Consultations are no more than window dressing. We saw it earlier this year when the budget was introduced before the legislative committee could do their pre-budget report. Before that report was tabled, the government already had their budget written, so nothing from the people of Ontario whatsoever.

The Auditor General has also pointed out that "the ministry has effectively cut the Ontario Energy Board ... out of the picture." One of the main reasons, Speaker, as you know, for the OEB is to protect the interests of consumers and to consider the prices and adequacy, reliability and quality of our electricity service. But with no oversight of the power planning system and a very limited oversight of the generation costs, the Auditor General notes that the OEB cannot do what it's meant to do. That's a problem, Speaker. The two technical plans that were submitted never made it far enough to get reviewed by the OEB, something the OEB is required to do by legislation from 2004.

The policy plans that the ministry says replace the technical plans are not required by legislation, which also means the OEB is not mandated to review them. The OEB wasn't consulted at all over the privatization of Hydro One. It's one of the largest privatizations of a government-owned generation asset in Canada, and the Liberal government sees no benefit in engaging the Ontario Energy Board, a board whose job it is to protect consumers' interests. That is just more evidence of the unbelievable arrogance of this government.

This arrogance and mismanagement of our hydro system is costing the people of Ontario dearly. Smart meters were supposed to move power consumption from peak times to other times of the day. That didn't work and it

cost us \$2 billion. A boondoggle, they call it—\$2 billion. Think how that money could have been spent. We are starving our hospitals. We have wait-lists for residential services for people with severe developmental disabilities whose parents are unable to adequately care for them, people struggling to survive on minimal social assistance payments, autistic children over the age of five being denied treatment they were promised, yet we can blow \$2 billion on failed smart meter plans. Brilliant.

We dump \$1.5 billion in surplus power every year from our electricity market. The Auditor General reported last year that we actually paid \$32.6 million between 2009 and 2014 for other jurisdictions to take the power we produced. And let's not forget the gas plants scandal, Speaker—another billion dollars more down the drain, thanks to this government's energy file. And how does the government address their abysmal record? By bringing us this bill that puts the legislative requirements in place that actually codify their bad behaviour.

As bad as the past 10 years of electricity policy have been, there has at least been a legislative framework that, if followed, would have prevented some of the worst excesses, but this bill wipes all of that away and gives the minister free rein to bring further havoc to Ontarians. Several respected professionals presented to the committee. By the looks of my time, I'll have to try to get them in and their quotes and what they said at committee during that time, because there's definitely a lot to say on this bill and the hurt it does to the people of this province.

0930

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think this is the first time that I'm able to speak while you're in the chair. Congratulations, and I know you'll do a fine job.

I'm delighted to make a couple of comments on the 10 minutes that I heard from the member from Hamilton Mountain. I was hoping to hear her talk about Bill 135, but I didn't hear much about that.

This is really about putting in place a structure that will help planning for the future of our energy and, in some cases, so that we'll be able to manage how we control costs, how we move forward to make sure that we have a reliable system, and of course, I didn't hear much on that.

The status quo that the former government left behind—

Miss Monique Taylor: Oh, here we go.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Yes, that's right. Here we go.

Interjection: The truth hurts.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: The truth hurts. And it wasn't their government. It was the government opposite.

In the municipality of Alnwick/Haldimand, which is in my riding—near the Big Apple, by the way—the government of the day had to put in a diesel generator to make sure that businesses and homes would maybe have power when they needed it, Speaker. Those days are gone. But

we have to make sure we don't go back to those—pardon the pun—dark days. This is what this intends to do.

When I hear about all the other stuff, it's hard to—I would hope that they would support this and I would hope that whoever speaks about it—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I've heard so much of this fairy tale for so long, and the charade, so I want to applaud the member from Hamilton Mountain. I don't intend to support this bill.

I remember that blackout in 2003. Just a history lesson: It was created in, I think, Ohio from a tree branch falling, and then the power cascaded.

It's a bunch of malarkey that you guys stand up and try to defend the billions of dollars you've wasted—and that's according to the Auditor General, and you know that.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I have 5,000 names on an online petition saying that you guys are on the wrong track with your energy policies. If you want to come on down to Sarnia—Lambton and try to peddle this stuff, I'll gladly take you around to all the industries that will show you the door when you get there.

Anyway, the costs that you've unloaded onto the general public and the ratepayers of this province is a travesty, and you know it. I'd love to go and sit in your constituency offices someday and see when the people come there, because I can't believe that the people in Sarnia—Lambton or in Hamilton are the only people who care about energy rates—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Come to my office in Peterborough and I'll buy you lunch.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I wish you would.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I will.

Mr. Robert Bailey: All right. I'll come.

I want to poll the people in your ridings because I can't believe that the people in our part of the province are any different than anyone else.

I have 5,000 names on an online petition that are challenging that leaked document in the Globe and Mail. I would love to get that up to 10,000, and when I do, I'll make sure I tell you. It's online today, and this will probably help drive it up some more today. It goes up about 200 a day. I hope you heckle me some more. I'm going to try to speak all day and I'm going to mention it all the time, so I can keep increasing the numbers. I'll make sure that they know the true story.

I've got more to say, but I'll have to leave it till I get another shot at it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I know that there is a lot of this cross-talking amongst the members. But I want to encourage everybody to be respectful. There's a lot of shouting across the floor. We need to be respectful to each other during this debate. There's a lot of emotion and a lot of cross-talk. Please speak through the Chair.

I recognize the member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you very much, Chair. I'm going to speak through the Chair. How's that?

I want to rise today on Bill 135, but I want to talk about electricity costs in the province of Ontario in relation to what's going on in the province over the next few months, over the summer. Some very important things are going to happen over the summer. Big Three bargaining is going to happen with Ford, Chrysler and General Motors, where we have an auto industry that relies on hydro.

I was at a function for the United Way. General Motors and their employees in St. Catharines donated almost half a million dollars to the United Way. But the plant manager, Carolyn Watts, pulls me over—I used to be a chair of United Way—and she says, “Gatesy, I've got to tell you, we've got a crisis in St. Catharines.” I said, “What's”—

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Gatesy?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I've worked with her before.

I said, “What's the problem?” She said, “Hydro rates are killing us. The plant will be in jeopardy if we don't get hydro rates in the province of Ontario under control.” That wasn't me saying that; that was the plant manager, who wants to make sure that those 2,000 jobs and those seven off-jobs that are there will be there in the parts sector, whether it be in machine shops.

I watched the news just the other day, and the president of Chrysler—in Windsor, they have a great plant there. They're producing one of the best vehicles in the world, where they have 6,000 or 7,000 employees right in the plant. Do you know what he said? The biggest concern for him to invest in the province of Ontario is hydro rates.

So when people stand up and talk to our colleagues on the Liberal side, it's not me saying it. I can stand up and say whatever I want and you can agree or disagree, but these are people in decision-making positions who are going to put jobs into our province and make sure our kids and our grandkids have jobs.

I'll finish this up in my next two minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I listened carefully to what the member from Hamilton Mountain was saying and listened very carefully to all of the comments that followed. In the entire cycle, nobody talked about the bill. I heard talk about auto-sector bargaining, Hydro One, stranded debt, and years-old resolved issues—things that have nothing to do with power planning.

I'm looking at the notes I've made as the parliamentary assistant, supplying my own two-minuters and doing my own part in the debate. We've said almost everything that needs to be said on this particular bill. There is nothing new being said on it. I have nothing to respond to messages that have nothing to do with the bill.

It just strikes me that we are very near the time to move forward on this bill. We need to get on with the next version of the long-term energy plan. We need to get that process started, get out into the community and start

hearing from people. We need to take a system that worked well in 2013—and should now be law, should this bill pass—and get that system out so that we can give Ontarians a good vision of their energy future moving forward from 2017. It's time to get on with the job, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I turn to the member from Hamilton Mountain to wrap up.

Miss Monique Taylor: This has definitely been a lively debate, and I think that just really goes to the heart of the matter, which is what this does to the people of this province, what it does to their pocketbook and what it does to their hydro bill.

I was reminded of another story of a woman who lives on a disability cheque. She's disabled, through no fault of her own. She lives in a lower-income part of town. She doesn't turn her heat on. She heats her home by turning her oven on and opening the door of her oven. She wears a lot of sweaters and a lot of socks and a lot of blankets, and she thinks it's okay that she lives like this. That's not okay, Speaker. It's not okay that people in our province live like this, in the city of Hamilton.

Take that farther up north, where the costs are that much higher, where many people are paying for electric heat. How are those people feeling? It's so much colder.

That's the crux of this debate. This bill went to committee, and not one amendment was passed—not one amendment. How do you put through an entire bill of this nature, that talks about our energy system in the province of Ontario, and not one amendment could be passed? Why? Because the Liberals know best. It doesn't matter what file it is; it doesn't matter what's happening; the Liberals have the majority and the Liberals win. They have the first say, they have the middle say, they have the final say and that's it. They don't want to hear from anybody else and, quite frankly, when they have to hear from somebody else, we have to put up with the heckling and everything else that goes on. My thought is the people of this province. I wish they felt the same.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Good morning to you and good morning to the good people of Ottawa-Orléans and all members of the House. It's a pleasure, actually, and a delight to stand up this morning. As my colleague mentioned and made reference to, in this bill, it's about planning for our future. When I think about our long-term energy planning, it's certainly an essential piece of legislation in terms of clean, reliable and affordable energy for our future.

Ontarians have been clear that they want to play a role in our government's long-term energy process, and this government has listened, Madam Speaker, and introduced this bill, the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015. I know we've been talking about it and I know some of my colleagues have been sharing. I just want to reiterate a few points. If passed, this legislation—and it's very important—will actually ensure that a consistent,

transparent, long-term planning process is followed. It would also enshrine in law a requirement for extensive consultation.

I'm going to have to wear my glasses on this one, Madam Speaker.

It would enshrine in law a requirement for extensive consultation with the public, stakeholders and aboriginal groups in the development of energy plans, as is already standard practice. It would also amend the Green Energy Act of 2009 by introducing two new initiatives to help Ontario families, businesses and the province as a whole to conserve energy and water to manage costs, and it would support increased competition and enhanced ratepayer value by empowering the IESO to undertake competitive processes for transmitter selection or procurement, when appropriate.

Madam Speaker, I have to say this bill has now seen over 18 hours of debate between second and third readings. I think this has been considerable debate.

Interjections.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Yes, I agree. We've heard a wide range of viewpoints, opinions and certainly perspectives. There are other pieces of legislation that need to come to the floor for debate. I want to talk about Bill 178, the Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act, and I think about Bill 181, the Municipal Elections Modernization Act. I would like to spend some time to debate some of those other very important pieces of legislation that are currently before the House. We really can't, because Bill 135 is still being dealt with. As a result, Madam Speaker, with your indulgence, I move that this question now be put.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Madame Lalonde has moved that the question now be put.

I'm satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I can hear some nos.

All those in favour of the motion that the question now be put, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion that the question be put, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. A recorded vote will be required. The vote will be deferred until after question period today.

Vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Orders of the day? The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Madam Speaker, I know that in the great riding of Peterborough business is continuing as we speak, but here at Queen's Park there's no further business at this time.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): If there's no further—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): There are no points of order.

We're going to recess the House until 10:30.

The House recessed from 0944 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm pleased to introduce my constituency staff, Lisa LaPierre and Julie Blake; a co-op student from Peninsula Shores District School, Alex Pickett; and a Rotary Club exchange student from Osaka, Japan, Tomoki "Tomcat" Maeda. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: It's my pleasure to introduce the almost 50 young people sitting in the gallery from Grassy Narrows First Nation who are here with us today. As we know, they've travelled over 1,700 kilometres. Over 1,000 members and supporters from the community will be here demanding for their area to be cleaned up. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: From my riding of Barrie, I'd like to welcome Ellie Stones, the recipient of the victim services award of distinction, as well as her parents, Shannon and Kevin, and her grandfather Randy Lovelace.

I would also like to welcome Jennifer Jackson and Jennie-May Banks, who accepted the same award on behalf of the Child Advocacy Centre of Simcoe/Muskoka.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: It gives me great pleasure to introduce Yvonne Lindfield, who is in the gallery behind us here. She was a recipient of a victim services award of distinction for victims of crime at the ceremony this morning with the Attorney General.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Good morning. I have a number of guests from Windsor this morning. Miss Emily Gilbert is here with her mom, Shelley. Shelley was one of the recipients of the Attorney General's awards of distinction this morning. They are joined by Theresa Ouellette-Klein from Windsor. Welcome to question period and Queen's Park this morning.

Hon. Jeff Leal: It gives me great pleasure to introduce Sheena Howard, who's in the members' east gallery today. She is a very accomplished nurse who works at the Peterborough Clinic in Peterborough.

Mr. Patrick Brown: I have a number of introductions to make. As was recognized, Jennifer Jackson, executive director of the Child Advocacy Centre of Simcoe/Muskoka is here, along with Jennie-May Banks. They won awards at the victim services awards of distinction.

I also have the pleasure to introduce a long-time family friend, Simon Hirsch, who is here today in the Speaker's gallery, as well as the most loving and smart person I know in my life: My mother, Judy Brown, is here.

Last but not least, the pillar of my family, my grandmother, who is 102 years old, is at Queen's Park for the very first time. Thank you to the Speaker for having her in his gallery.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Anyone who's 102 gets to do anything and go anywhere they want.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's my pleasure and honour to recognize and acknowledge Dr. Mohit Bhandari and his daughter Kaya, who are both here. Dr. Bhandari is a

recipient of a victim services award of distinction for his work on issues of violence against women and intimate-partner violence.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'd like to recognize Rubaiyat Karim, who is the manager of the York Region Centre for Community Safety and was here accepting the Attorney General's victim services award on behalf of her organization.

Also, Leslie Bullock from the St. John Ambulance support dog project was here accepting an award on behalf of her program.

And two people from my riding of Newmarket-Aurora, Jill and Andrew Kellie, are here to have lunch as constituents.

I'd also like to welcome my constituency assistant Trish Palichuk and her son Jack, who are in the gallery today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Given my comments over the last couple of days on introduction of guests—it looks like there are quite a few here today—let's get through those introductions. I'll give you the time that's necessary to do that, so don't fret, but let's make sure we introduce all of our guests now.

The member from Parkdale-High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's my pleasure to acknowledge, in the members' gallery, Elizabeth Gajewski, who is a Parkdale-High Park constituent and winner of the Attorney General's Victim Services Awards of Distinction for her work for women who have been abused and for all of those in the Eastern European and particularly the Polish communities.

Also, our page captain today is Ariane Parent. Her mother, Isabel Blair; her father, Patrick Parent; and her brother David are all here in the gallery this morning. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: On behalf of Lorenzo Berardinetti, MPP for Scarborough Southwest, page captain Sulin Fletcher's family is here. I'm pleased to welcome them: mother, Peggy Brooks; aunt Dianne Algera; and aunt Joanne Brooks. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It gives me great pleasure to welcome Ms. Lindsay Upton, a winner of this year's victim services awards, from my riding. She's in attendance here today. Welcome.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I have a number of introductions. First of all, welcome to Dan Ashbourne and Rachel Crawford here from the London Family Court Clinic, being recognized in the victim services awards of distinction.

From OUSA, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, we have Zak Rose, Armin Escher, Danielle Pierre, Justin Bedi and Lindsay D'Souza.

Last and absolutely not least, a very special guest, Tami Tran, in the east gallery. Welcome all.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to introduce another one of our Attorney General's victim services awards winners: from Family Counselling and Support Services for Guelph-Wellington, executive director, Joanne Young Evans, and chair of the board, Sandra Ellis. Welcome.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'd like to extend a warm welcome to Kerri Tadeu. She is also a recipient of the Attorney General's Victim Services Awards of Distinction. Thank you for being here today.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I'm very pleased to introduce a good friend and a great Ontarian, Mr. Robert Simpson, president of HopeLink International. With Mr. Simpson is Levi Beady, who is a board member of HopeLink International. Welcome to both of you, gentlemen.

Hon. Michael Coteau: It is my distinct pleasure to introduce Stephan Jost, who is the new CEO of the AGO, and his colleague Lisa Clements.

While I'm here, I'd also like to welcome Paul Costa to the Legislature here today.

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a couple of guests from Scarborough-Rouge River. I want to welcome them: Jan Pieter Broekhof, Anne Broekhof, Sandra Broekhof, Christopher Sampson, Lilian Sampson, Kathleen Broekhof, Maria Broekhof, Rick Gocool, Lucia Broekhof, Luke Foss, Sarah Church and Robert Sprague.

Also, I want to welcome my colleague and a friend, Dr. Gail Donner, who is here with us today.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'd like to welcome Michelle Barclay, Mary Lou Loughlin, Pam Preston and Doug Barclay, who are from my riding of Halton and are up in the public gallery. Michelle is described by police officers as "invaluable" and by victims as an "angel." She was one of the victim services awards recipients this morning.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce some very important health care stakeholders we have here with us in the gallery. We have representatives from the Service Employees International Union, or SEIU Healthcare, Kitchener-Waterloo SEIU, the representatives from the Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres, and from the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. We also have representatives from the Association of Ontario Health Centres, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies and, finally, my external adviser on home and community care, Gail Donner.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'd like to introduce the parents of today's page captain Waleed Malik. From the great riding of Oak Ridges-Markham, we have Asghari Begum and his father, Kashif Malik.

1040

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like to introduce in the House this year's winners of the victim services award, who are here for question period—especially Ellie, who is one of the recipients, 11 years old. I think she's going to replace me in a few years.

Hon. Mario Sergio: From the wonderful riding of York West, I'd like to welcome in the House Louise Russo and friends. I hope she will enjoy the proceedings today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Further introductions. Minister responsible for seniors.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Speaker, I believe you will find we have unanimous consent—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): One moment, please.

I'm honoured to welcome a Brant constituent who has received a victim services award this morning for their program Embrace Her With Love, the executive director of Ganohkwasra Family Assault Services Centre, Sandi Montour. Welcome.

We also have with us today in the Speaker's gallery the education committee of the Parliament of Sweden, led by chair Ms. Lena Hallegren. Thank you for joining us.

The minister responsible for seniors on a point of order.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've been notified there are other introductions.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I believe we have members of the community from Grassy Narrows here. I just want to welcome them to Queen's Park.

Also, I noticed a good friend of mine, Darcy MacNeill, is in the House. I'm just disappointed that he's sitting on the other side.

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now I will entertain the minister responsible for seniors' issues.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear pins in recognition of June 2, Italy's national day, and Italian Heritage Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister responsible for seniors' issues is seeking unanimous consent to wear the pins today. Do we agree? Agreed.

WEARING OF FLOWERS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe—Grey.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I seek unanimous consent to allow all members to wear a cornflower to commemorate June as ALS Awareness Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe—Grey is seeking unanimous consent to wear the cornflower. Do we agree? Agreed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Parents across Ontario still don't know what to do since this government has turned their back on children with autism.

Parent and professor Janet McLaughlin has said that legal avenues are being considered in terms of filing

human rights complaints. She said that they are looking to challenge this government for discriminating against children with autism just because of their age.

This would not be the first time the Liberals have fought parents with children with autism in the court. I would not be surprised if the Liberals were ready to go to court again. After all, their member from Mississauga—Streetsville did call the police on a parent with a child with autism.

Mr. Speaker, will the Liberals be fighting parents in the courtroom instead of giving children the help that they deserve?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: On this side of the House, we are focused on making sure that every child with autism gets the services that they need. Otherwise, we would not be investing \$333 million. It is our focus to make sure that kids who are sitting on a waiting list—it really is surprising to me that both opposition parties think it's better to have children sitting on a waiting list getting no service than actually getting service.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm asking everyone to come to order. I will repeat from yesterday if I have to. I will do that quickly. It's your choice.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We recognize that every family needs to have an assessment and needs to be in contact with a provider, and that the transition needs to be clear to parents. All of us have been meeting with parents. The minister has been working to make sure that each family gets the information they need so their children can get the services they need.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: Over the long weekend, I sat at a Tim Hortons in Mississauga with Melanie Palaypayon; her husband, Clint; and her son, Xavier. When they were there, the husband, Clint, couldn't stop crying—crying in the crowded Tim Hortons. They said to me that he moved to Canada a decade ago thinking that this is a country where, if you work hard, if something happens, there would be a social safety net you could depend upon. He said to me—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Mr. Patrick Brown: The government can heckle as much as they want, but you know what? He told me that all they wanted was to talk to their government representative, their Liberal MPP, to explain what this means, that IBI wouldn't be available for their child, Xavier.

The Mississauga—Streetsville MPP apologized but only after it was exposed on the front page of the Toronto Star, only once CTV's Paul Bliss exposed it.

The family asked me to ask today if the Premier will apologize—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the member has apologized. It is unacceptable to me that, quite frankly, any member in this House would not meet with parents who are concerned about their children. We are all doing that. A meeting has been offered to the family.

As I said, we are focused on making sure that every family in this province with children with autism has the information that they need and that their children get the services that they need.

It was unacceptable and is unacceptable to me that we would have children on a waiting list for two, three or four years, getting no service and no support. We are putting in place a program that will allow those kids to get the service that they need and to get it in the time frame that is the best for them and the most effective in terms of treatment. That's what we're focused on.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplement.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: What is unacceptable is that your government callously kicked 2,200 kids off the list for IBI.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader.

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question was not to hear more government talking points; my question was the family. The family wants an apology. They want an apology from the Premier. It was the Liberal Party representative who, instead of meeting with a family in tears about seeing their child's life thrown away by this government because IBI won't be available, despite waiting three years on the list—Melanie's wish is that the Premier, today in the Legislature, will apologize for the despicable actions of the member from Mississauga—Streetsville. It is never acceptable for a member to call the cops on a constituent. Meet with that constituent. Help that constituent.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In this instance, the member has apologized. The reality is that we all have constituency offices. We all know that we have to take advice from the police in particular circumstances. This was not one of them.

The member has apologized and has offered several dates to the family for a meeting. I hope that the family will take the member up on that and will have a meeting with him.

We are focused on making sure that every child in this province with autism gets the service that they need. The member opposite, I hope, is having the opportunity to talk with families and to give them the information—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds—Grenville, come to order.

Wrap up, please, Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We know that these are families that are in transition—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin—Caledon, come to order.

The minute I sit down and somebody else says something, I'm going to warn you.

1050

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We've been listening to the families. One of the issues that they have raised is the issue of direct funding—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds—Grenville is warned. We're inching closer.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: One of the issues that families have raised has been direct funding. We're talking right now about whether there's a possibility of providing more direct funding. The \$8,000 is direct funding. Is there a way that parents can have more choice? That's the kind of listening that we're doing because we want to make sure that we get this transition right so that every child gets the services that they need.

ELECTION FINANCES

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. And let me say, I'm disappointed that the Premier won't apologize to the Palaypayon family, despite a direct ask to do so.

But we'll talk about something else. Ever since we learned about the Liberal ministers—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The deputy House leader is warned. Carry on.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Ever since we learned about Liberal ministers hosting \$6,000 dinners with those trying to do business with the government, people have been asking questions. People have been asking: How much money would you have to donate to the Liberal government to change a regulation or a law? Well, one estimate that's just out is \$52,700. That is exactly what Ticketmaster and its parent company donated to the Liberals before the government made changes to ticket sale laws in favour of scalpers.

The Liberals continue to reveal themselves one scandal at a time. How can this government deny the blatant pay-to-play policy that they've operated under?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I've been very clear that policy is made based on the evidence, based on challenges that are facing whatever sector, and have nothing to do with—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is warned. You've asked me to go there; I'm going there.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Policies have nothing to do with the fundraising that we do. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition knows full well that we're in the process now of getting consultations in place to go out to the public, to have a conversation about how we should change the fundraising rules. There's draft legislation that is going to be out to committee, and I look forward to the

input from people around the province on things like third-party advertising and on the rules that should be in place around donations to all of our parties, because we all operate under the same rules.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: When the change was made last year, John Karastamatis from Mirvish Productions said he believed that the government caved to pressure from big ticketholder operations such as Ticketmaster and Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment. But wait a second: Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment happened to donate \$30,000 to the Liberal Party. So that's \$52,000 and \$30,000, for a total of \$82,000 from those who benefited from this change. Maybe the Liberals didn't cave to pressure, but rather it appears that government policies can be bought under this Liberal government.

Mr. Speaker, if the government has nothing to hide, why would they not welcome our call for a public inquiry? I'll ask again: Will the government accept our request for a public inquiry?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please. Having thought through what I heard, I will warn the Leader of the Opposition: Do not go down there again.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, we're moving forward to reform political fundraising in this province with the Election Finances Act. We look forward to the conversation that will take place over the coming weeks with the public in Ontario about the changes that we're putting forward, the banning of corporate and union donations, reducing the pre-writ spending limits and eliminating third-party advertising. We look forward to the committee discussions. We look forward to suggestions on amendments that might come forward. I was disappointed to hear that the NDP actually voted against that consultation yesterday. That was surprising. But we are confident that with the intensive consultations that will happen over the summer, we'll have a good bill going forward and we'll be able to reform those rules so they will be in place for January 2017.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: As Gord Downie sang, "Isn't it amazing what you can accomplish / When you don't let the nation get in your way?" Well, isn't it amazing what the Liberals can accomplish when they don't let ethics get in the way?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Beaches—East York is warned.

Finish, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, isn't it amazing what the Liberals can accomplish when they don't let ethics get in the way?

The Liberals can "hang your head in woe" now that they've been caught, but it looks like they still think they

have done nothing wrong—over \$80,000 to the Liberal Party coffers from these companies, and then, with the stroke of a pen, this government changes the law in their favour.

My question is, if this government has done nothing wrong, if the Premier feels they have done nothing wrong, why would they not want to clear the air and support our call for a public inquiry?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll take Gord Downie's lyrics and his tone over the Leader of the Opposition's any time.

We are moving ahead on reforming the election finances of this province. We're going to do that with the opposition parties or without them. I hope they'll take part. I hope that they will take an active part in the committee discussions. But we're going to be in conversation with the people of this province so that we can get feedback on the kinds of changes that they think are appropriate. We make policy separate from political donations.

At the same time, we believe that modernizing fundraising rules is what—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have three in mind. If I hear it again, you will.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Having said that, we know that modernizing the fundraising rules is what needs to happen. We're moving ahead on that. We look forward to the participation of everyone in the House.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The government keeps track of the repairs that schools need, and that information is public. If a school has something called an FCI, facility condition index score over 65%, the state of repair of that school is considered critical.

Yesterday, I was in Scarborough, where advocates told me about Sir Alexander Mackenzie school, which has—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: —which has an FCI score of 85%, and Sir William Osler, which has a score of 84%. Remember, 65% is considered critical. These schools are beyond critical.

Why has this Premier let Scarborough schools fall into such a state of disrepair?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The importance of an FCI, or the facility condition index, is that a board can track the needs of schools so that there can be an orderly use of maintenance dollars as those are available. It's only responsible. It's like a municipality having an asset

management plan—understanding the condition of your assets so that as you make investments, you can do that in an orderly way so that it's not random, so that it's not haphazard, but it's actually done in a way that is responsible. That's what an FCI is about.

I am absolutely pleased that the TDSB still has an FCI, that boards across the province have those, so that as they make investments in their schools, they do so in an orderly and responsible way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People expect the government to get the basics right. In our education system, making sure a school is properly repaired is one of the basics. For example, students in our schools should not have to be wearing winter coats during the wintertime while they're in the classroom. But we're seeing schools falling apart, not only in Scarborough but across this province.

Can the Premier explain how she's getting something that is so basic so wrong?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: As the leader has acknowledged, we in fact do keep track—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Liz Sandals: —of the facility condition indexes so that we have a common measure of the state of repair of schools around the province. We quite recognize that there are some older schools that require funding.

1100

That's why, in 2014, we actually announced an investment of \$1.25 billion over three years, specifically for the repair of schools with high FCIs. For this year, the 2016-17 year coming up, that investment will amount to \$500 million, half a billion dollars, which we are sending to boards. That's based on the boards with the most high FCIs getting—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Schools in Scarborough have cracked walls, missing ceiling tiles, cracked foundations, broken doors—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Economic Development is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just to make sure you heard me as you continued, you're warned.

Finish, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: These schools could quite literally fall apart unless they're immediately repaired, and repaired properly.

This is not an environment that encourages learning, nor is it a proper work environment for educators. It sends all the wrong messages. Can this Premier tell students, their parents and their educators why she's letting schools fall into this kind of disrepair?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I repeat: I would question the degree of disrepair. We do not have any schools that are going to fall down, but we have—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Windsor West is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Liz Sandals: We are investing \$1.25 billion. Over the last several years, we have invested \$13 billion in school board capital, and that includes replacing schools that are in need of repair. But we've also directed boards that have what are called proceeds of disposition from selling schools that are no longer needed. That money must also go into school repair. So we have made significant, major investments in school repair.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. The Liberals won't tell Ontarians if their local hospital is one of the hospitals that needs hundreds of millions of dollars in maintenance in order to prevent an imminent breakdown, but they provide that information for schools. In fact, the Premier just said that that's because they have to ensure there's an orderly use of maintenance dollars. In fact, she just said it's only the responsible thing to do in order to make sure that the repairs are done in an orderly way, not random, not haphazard.

Will the Premier admit now that she will not release information about hospital repair backlogs because she's more worried about bad PR for the Liberal Party than she is about delivering the best care in our hospitals for our patients?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm so glad the leader of the third party asked this question, because it really demonstrates the depth of her misunderstanding.

The fact is that if she looks at the facility condition index of a school board, she will notice that there is no dollar amount attached to the school name. That's for a very good reason, because the facility condition index indicates the work that needs to be done, indicates where the challenges are and indicates the rating of that school, but it doesn't say, "And these repairs will cost X number of dollars," because that would prejudice the process of getting that school fixed.

It's a completely different process than the hospitals. It just demonstrates that she doesn't understand how we would get those repairs done in the hospitals. It's a different process. I think that if she looks at the FCIs, she'll understand why they're written the way they are.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, all it really shows is the depth of the arrogance of this government that responds to my question. It shows the depth of the arrogance of this Liberal Premier.

The Liberals will not tell Ontarians if their hospitals are up to code or not. In the school system, that's some-

thing that is quite well known. We know that Ontario hospitals need more than \$3 billion worth of repairs but we don't know which hospitals, and yet the school boards publicly allow that information to be out there. But for some reason, the Liberals refuse to allow the same information to be made public when it comes to hospitals. We have the information about schools, but the Liberals will not provide it about hospitals.

So my question, again back to the Premier, and perhaps she will answer it this time: Why won't she tell us which hospitals need the most repair work?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party is simply wrong. You do not have the information about how much money it would cost to fix the schools on a facility condition index. The fact is that what the leader of the third party is asking for is for the whole negotiation process around the cost of repairs to be undermined by making that information public, and then prejudicing the process. The leader of the third party is saying, "It doesn't matter what the negotiation is. It doesn't matter what the cost is. Let's just bump the cost up as high as it can be by acknowledging what we think the cost is, and by attaching the name of the hospital to it." That would be irresponsible, Mr. Speaker.

There are no dollar amounts attached to an FCI from a school board. The leader of the third party does not seem to understand exactly the damage that would be done if we were to do what she's asking.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I think, Speaker, the lack of understanding that exists in this chamber is this Premier's lack of understanding of the words "openness and transparency." We say that and so does our Financial Accountability Officer. This is another demonstration of the Liberals refusing to give public information to the public.

The government is not keeping up with critical repairs and maintenance in our hospitals. And what is worse, in response to our freedom-of-information request, the government admits that they have no plan to deal with any future maintenance needs. That means the repair backlog is only going to grow and the situation in our hospitals is only going to get worse. We see what that looks like when we see packed ERs, fewer nurses and fewer beds. People can see the crisis. Every patient in this province can see the crisis, but the Liberals are pretending that it does not exist.

Will this Premier stop defending her inaction and start dealing with the crisis in our health care system?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I have a shingled roof on my house. It's old and aging. In fact, I'm getting leaks into the top floor. I'm probably going to have to replace that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I got a lot of offers, actually, to provide me with contractors just then, Mr. Speaker.

Interjection.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm just amazed at some of the comments coming from the leader of the third party.

The reality is, I'm not going to go out there and advertise that I'm prepared to pay \$10,000 or \$15,000 for a new roof. I'm going to seek out several competent contractors, get them to bid on it, and choose the lowest price of the one who can do the best job. That's the same way we need to do it in the hospital system.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mrs. Gila Martow: My question is to the Premier. Last month while in Israel on a trade mission, the Premier affirmed this government's opposition to the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement against Israel when she said, "The BDS position is certainly not mine, nor is it that of our government. I entirely oppose the BDS movement."

At the same time, back here in Ontario, this Liberal government was quick to vote down a bill that fought against this new form of anti-Semitism, a bill that would prevent of the province of Ontario from conducting business with companies that support this movement.

We all know that if an institution organized a movement to marginalize, demonize and physically attack LGBT communities, this government would be outraged, yet when a government-funded institution does this to the Jewish communities, it's justified as free speech?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Stop the clock.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Energy is warned.

You have a wrap-up sentence.

1110

Mrs. Gila Martow: Why did this entire Liberal caucus, with the exception of one brave member, refuse to support our Jewish communities?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just say that it was a wonderful opportunity. I was honoured to be able to travel to Israel and I did, while there, make a statement about our government's opposition and lack of support for the BDS movement. Any movement or any initiative that promotes anti-Semitism, racism, Islamophobia, sexism or homophobia, any movement that chooses to divide or encourages that kind of hatred, we're going to oppose it and we stand opposed to it. With all of our policies and with all our fibre, we will stand against any movement that does that. That remains our position. It was a huge opportunity for us to travel to Israel and to meet with businesses, to meet with people from higher education and to form partnerships based on our knowledge economy, but also based on our cultural ties that are decades deep.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Niagara West—Glanbrook.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: You say you oppose the BDS movement, but the problem is you opposed the bill. You opposed a solution to help combat the growing anti-Semitism in our province and across campuses.

A young woman named Danielle Shachar appeared at the press conference hosted by the member for Eglinton—Lawrence, Mr. Colle, and I, and she said, “Because of my vocal opposition to BDS, my name was featured on a white supremacist website that has accused Jews of being members of a reptilian race. I cannot wear a Star of David on campus lest I be harassed. I cannot identify myself as an Israeli without being called a murderer.”

She says that wherever BDS motions pass, violent anti-Semitism follows. Surely it’s time to take a stand. None of us would ever countenance signing a contract with a business that refuses to do business with somebody because it’s owned by a woman or a Muslim or any other faith, but somehow we hide behind free speech because a business is owned by Jews or by Israelis?

Premier, let’s do the right thing, join President Obama, American Legislatures and Prime Minister Cameron, and fight back against BDS.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here’s my suggestion: I made the statement in Israel because I feel very strongly about, as I say, any movement or any initiative that would support anti-Semitism, would support Islamophobia, would support racism. I feel very, very strongly about any movement of that sort, so my suggestion to this House is, let’s figure out if we can craft a motion that is not divisive, that is actually unifying in nature, that is not flawed and chooses to divide people. Let’s see if we can work together.

I made this commitment when I was on the mission that we would work with the opposition parties, that we would try to come up with a motion that would pass in this Legislature and that would reflect the inclusiveness of all of the members of this Legislature. I suggest that we try to do that within the coming weeks.

MERCURY POISONING

Ms. Sarah Campbell: To the Premier: The people of Grassy Narrows have been told since 1970 not to eat the fish that they’ve relied on as a central part their life since time immemorial because of the mercury that was dumped in their river that makes them sick. They’ve been asking the Ontario government to fix it ever since. A report released earlier this week says it can be fixed, it can be cleaned and the fish can be made safe. Many community members are here with us today. Many of the youth who have travelled 1,700 kilometres are watching today.

Premier, will you look at these youth from Grassy Narrows who are sitting behind you and tell them that the rivers that make them sick today won’t be cleaned tomorrow and will never be cleaned in their lifetime?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is going to want to comment on this, but I just want to say to all of the young people and the people who have travelled from Grassy Narrows that this is something that is of great concern to me and to all of our caucus. I have been to Grassy Narrows. I have talked with people who have been affected by the mercury in the water and the fish.

I want there to be science that we can use to clean up the sediment and clean up the water and make sure that that ecosystem is clean. We have a report now that suggests that there may be a way of doing that, but the first thing the report says is that we need to look at some field studies, because it’s not conclusive. It’s not clear exactly how to do that without disturbing the sediment and making the situation worse. That’s the question we have to answer.

I do not want to make the situation worse; I only want to only work to fix it up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: When asked on Monday, the Premier said she hadn’t read the report. On Tuesday, she said she read the report, but what the report calls for wasn’t clear, even though the government has had the final report since April. On Wednesday, we learned that the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs had only received the report that day or the day before, when the government has had it since April.

The minister has called the science of the report “new.” This is not new science. In fact, it has been done in a number of communities across this province for decades. So let’s be clear: Enhanced natural remediation is possible.

Again, I ask the Premier: Will you tell the young people of Grassy Narrows when this government will start the remediation?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member opposite and to our good friends in the gallery: We are past the idea of doing more studies to look at the problem. We are now looking very specifically—working with Grassy Narrows First Nation and the federal government to figure out exactly what we have to do. It’s a complex range of sources there in Clay Lake and on the river. There are sediment and atmospheric issues, and there are ambient levels of methyl hydrate and mercury.

We are going to work very closely through the working group that has been established to ensure that we have proper solutions. The current situation is unacceptable, but we have to make sure, as the Premier said, that we’re undertaking efficient, near-term action, consistent with the leadership and desires of the community and

with good science that will actually solve the problem and not make it worse.

I find it unacceptable. I will not see this continue on my watch, Mr. Speaker.

VICTIMS OF CRIME

VICTIMES D'ACTES CRIMINELS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is for the Attorney General. This week is Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. Every year, this week raises awareness about issues facing victims of crime, as well as the services, programs and laws that can help these victims and their families during difficult—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please.

Sergeant.

We're not allowed to have displays in this place, please. If you are insistent on doing so, we'll have to clear the gallery.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Turn them inside out. If not, we'll have to clear the gallery, that section.

1120

Question, please.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: As I mentioned, it's Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. We also recognize the remarkable individuals who have put themselves on the front line to help others during crisis. These are often survivors of crime themselves and have raised the profile of victims' issues in Ontario.

Today, we're honoured to have this year's victim services award winners here at Queen's Park, including my constituent Michelle Barclay. Michelle is one of our unsung heroes and has worked tirelessly to help others.

Mr. Speaker, can the Attorney General tell us more about how this program improves services to victims and raises awareness about issues facing victims of crime in Ontario?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I want to thank the member from Halton for this very important question.

Our government is committed to increasing the effectiveness of victim services across the province. One step in achieving this goal is to help ensure that local agencies know about and learn from the successes of exemplary individuals and organizations.

I want to acknowledge the strength and courage of victims and their family members. I also want to recognize the volunteers, professionals and organizations for their tireless efforts on behalf of the victims of crime.

This morning, I was very proud to meet with all of our award recipients. Thank you for being here today. Thank you for all you're doing on behalf of survivors in the province. It was very moving to hear all the good work that these people are doing in our communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the Attorney General. It's unfortunate, actually, that our award winners are no longer in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, I recently learned that the week used to be called National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, but the name was changed to include the term "survivor." That's because we recognize that victims of crime are survivors. They're able to overcome trauma and grow to a place of strength, healing and recovery.

That's why Halton resident Michelle was honoured today. For 13 years, her selfless acts of kindness and compassion have earned the recognition of her colleagues and the people she helps.

Thank you, Michelle, and thank you to all of those who assist survivors with support and healing. Through events like this morning's, which was emotional, we say "no"—no to the injustices and indignities experienced by victims of crime.

I'm proud our government has implemented initiatives like our action plan. Can the minister please expand on her efforts to support victim services in this province?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: A good question, Mr. Speaker. When we came into power in 2003, funding for victim services totalled just over \$30 million. That number has more than doubled in my ministry to over \$67 million.

I am incredibly proud of programs like our It's Never Okay action plan against sexual violence and harassment, as well as our efforts on behalf of rural Ontarians, indigenous Ontarians and many others.

However, it is the organizations and individuals who work tirelessly on the front lines to help victims of crime when they need it the most. I said it this morning, and I'll say it again today: The award recipients in the room today are role models for us all. Je veux les remercier d'être ici et je veux les remercier pour tout le travail qu'ils font dans nos communautés.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Energy. A recently published document by the Ontario Energy Board stated that the OEB intends to hide the cost of cap-and-trade-related price increases for natural gas by concealing them as delivery charges in ratepayers' bills. This concealment suggests that the OEB thinks Ontarians do not deserve to know why their rates are going up and that the government is hiding the damage that its misguided cap-and-trade scheme will do to Ontario families.

The minister likes to state in this House that the OEB is there to protect Ontario's consumers. How can that be if the OEB is saying that consumers should be kept in the dark regarding the effect the government's cap-and-trade scheme will have on natural gas prices?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'm not aware of the document, whatever he's reading, or where it comes from, Mr. Speaker. I'd be happy to take a look at it.

The Ontario Energy Board has done tremendous service for the province of Ontario over the last decade or

so. They are 100% independent. They represent the interests of consumers in this province. They hear hearings for rate increases and roll them back or even reduce them below what they've asked for. We're very proud of their job.

I don't know what he's referring to, but they are not accustomed to doing the type of things that he's accusing them of. I will certainly look into what he's saying, but I have trouble believing that the Ontario Energy Board would not, in every instance, be 100% transparent with the public.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: You appoint the people to the Ontario Energy Board. Perhaps they've been taking their lead from your government, because you've talked about openness and transparency, and we've yet to see it since this government was elected in 2004.

While the minister may wish to stand aside and let the OEB conceal the truth about what will happen to energy rates in this province when cap-and-trade begins to impact our economy, we believe ratepayers have the right to know the truth behind the cost of their natural gas bill.

We know this plan will drive up the cost for ratepayers and make home heating and commercial heating in this province less affordable. That the OEB and the government are trying to hide this from ratepayers is completely unacceptable given that Quebec and California, your cap-and-trade partners, allow separate cap-and-trade line items to appear on their bills.

Minister, if you want to say that the Ontario Energy Board—if you want to do an advertisement for them, that's fine. But you are used to giving directives. I would suggest it's time for you to give one more: Make sure that cap and trade has a separate line item on natural gas bills because—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, the member would know that under this Ontario Energy Board, the price of natural gas has gone down by about 40%. It is down lower than it has been for decades and decades. The public is being very, very well served.

It is an independent organization. It goes through—

Interjections.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: As minister, I have 100% confidence in the Ontario Energy Board to represent the interests of the consumers of this province. I don't know what document he's referring to, but they go to every end of the earth to hear the public, to have delegations come in and, in the appropriate cases, to even reduce increases that have been asked for by LDCs and gas companies.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Earlier this week, the Environmental Commissioner said that conservation was Ontario's cheapest energy option, and she's right. But OPG is proceeding with

an expensive nuclear refurbishment plan that will add over \$5 per month to our electricity bills on top of everything else that's coming at us—and that's if these nuclear projects come in on budget. Speaker, we know nuclear projects never come in on budget.

When Ontario already has a massive energy surplus, adding billions to our electricity bills, why didn't the minister hold back on costly nuclear projects so Ontarians can finally be rewarded, not punished, for their conservation efforts?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'd like to quote from the commissioner's report to begin with:

"Ontario has focused on conserving electricity and natural gas, via conservation programs delivered by electric and natural gas utilities and funded by their customers. Both gas and electricity conservation programs have consistently proven to be cost-effective. On the whole, Ontario's investments in electric and natural gas conservation have made sense." That's the quote from the Environmental Commissioner.

1130

The member will know that the projections, which have been validated by third parties, show that the cost of electricity coming from our nuclear generation after the refurbishment will be at 7.7 cents per kilowatt hour. That is a bargain for the public.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Just to note, conservation is a lot cheaper than that number. Conservation has worked in Ontario. We use less electricity to do more. But in Ontario, when we use less, we get to pay more. This is because the government keeps signing new contracts for even more electricity that we don't need. Ontarians have to pay for this electricity whether we use it or not. Ontario now has an electricity surplus far greater than the total output of Pickering.

Instead of driving up our electricity bills even further, why won't the minister allow our conservation programs to do what they're supposed to do: reduce energy use and lower our hydro bills?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Again, a quote from the Environmental Commissioner: "Both gas and electricity conservation programs have consistently proven to be cost-effective when measured by appropriate post-implementation cost-effectiveness tests." That's an independent assessment of our conservation program.

What the member will not talk about is the fact that we have 60% of our generation coming from nuclear. Projecting in the future, it will be 50%, and it's 100% emissions-free. We're on the right page on this file and I don't accept the criticism of the critic.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Yvan Baker: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, in December you released Patients First: A Proposal to Strengthen Patient-Centred Health Care in Ontario. At that time, I know that your ministry invited people from across Ontario to

provide their feedback on this proposal to strengthen and integrate Ontario's health system. In fact, I myself hosted a Patients First consultation in Etobicoke Centre at Humber Valley United Church. We had a wonderful turnout and some excellent input from a diverse group of constituents.

I understand that thousands of Ontarians responded. They said a range of things, including that they wanted a system built around the needs of the patient that represents the unique needs of all Ontarians, where home and community care, primary care and public health are streamlined, and that promotes health equity and reduces disparities. I know that in my riding I heard a little bit about the issue about equitable access to care as well.

Minister, could you please tell the House about the government's plan to put patients first?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke Centre for this important question. I want to again acknowledge the many health care leaders who have joined us in the gallery today.

Later today, I will introduce the Patients First Act, which would, if passed, put patients at the centre of a truly integrated health care system. It would give Ontario's 14 local health integration networks, our LHINs, an expanded role, one that connects all parts of the health care system—including, for the first time, primary care—to home and community care, to improve planning and delivery of front-line services for patients.

These proposed changes would mean easier and more equitable access to care, better coordination and continuity of care, and a greater focus on health equity and the social determinants of health. We would also honour our commitment to meaningfully engage indigenous partners through a parallel process that will collaboratively identify how we can achieve a transformational change in how care is accessed and delivered to them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you, Minister, for that thorough and thoughtful response.

In Etobicoke Centre, we have one of the largest proportions of seniors in the province. I know that the issues you're working on touch on people of all ages and all backgrounds, but certainly the seniors whom I represent in the community will appreciate hearing what you've just said.

Minister, I know that our government has worked hard to ensure that patients are at the centre of the health care system. You just referred to that. I understand that the proposed changes would strengthen local health care planning and increase efficiency to allow more funding to flow to where it matters, which is to patients and to patient care. I also have heard, and am pleased to hear that the government intends to honour the commitment to meaningfully engage with our indigenous partners as well.

Minister, could you please provide an update on the status of the Patients First Act?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you again. Our action plan includes expanding access to home and community care and ensuring that every Ontarian has access to a primary care provider. The proposed legislative changes will ar-

ticulate our vision for a better, more integrated system, a system that improves access for patients who need to find a new—or their first—primary care health provider close to home.

It will facilitate local health care planning to ensure that patients receive more equitable access to care, regardless of where they live.

It will establish a formal relationship between LHINs and local boards of health to support joint health services planning.

It will ensure that caregivers' and families' voices are at the heart of our entire system and that it's accountable to patients and connects them with the care that they need.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Earlier this week, in responding to a question, the minister stated, "IBI and ABA are essentially the same thing." Yet I have minutes from the Minister of Education's Advisory Council on Special Education where your autism manager said, "Challenges with current autism services—ABA may not be intensive enough, and regression can occur between blocks of service."

Will the minister admit she was wrong to suggest that ABA and IBI are essentially the same?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the member for the question. I believe what I said, Speaker, was that the difference is intensity. Intensity is the key factor in terms of responding to the individual needs of a child. That's exactly why many service providers have had hundreds of meetings to date with families to talk about the individual requirements of their autistic child going forward, to plan their transition plan going forward and, for families who are coming off the IBI wait-list, to make sure they're fully aware of their options in terms of the \$8,000 of direct funding that they can use immediately.

Yes, we are developing a new program. It's one autism program that will be more individualized and have one point of entry and one point of assessment in making sure we're supporting these children going forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Minister, the more meetings that you have, the more confusion there is and the more children are being kicked off service. Parents understand that ABA and IBI are not the same. Board-certified analysts understand that ABA and IBI are not the same. Your own children and youth autism manager understands that they're not the same.

When will the minister start listening to the experts and stop removing children from accessing IBI therapy?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: To be frank, I would say, and I think my colleagues would say, that the more we

meet with families, the more helpful that is. That's the feedback that we've been getting. When members from all sides of the House need more information, my ministry's liaison is there to help, the service providers are there to help and the regional offices are there to help. Speaker, at the end of the day—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin-Caledon is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: The feedback we're getting is that more and more families are understanding the path forward. More and more families want to have that clear path about how the system is going to support their child and to recognize that we're moving to a system that recognizes that there's no age cut-off for autism. Kids who are on IBI will continue on IBI, and they will have their ongoing clinical assessments to determine—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Speaker, unfortunately, just prior to the holiday weekend, my community was witness to yet another multi-vehicle accident that resulted in a fatality. This is the second such tragedy that has happened on the same stretch of road that has yet to be widened on Highway 3—the second in the span of a month. This is no longer a coincidence; this is a pattern.

The government's own report from 2006 calls for the complete widening of that stretch due to the volume of traffic that it supported then. That volume of traffic has now increased by 30%. Despite the data, the petitions, the motions and the letters from all local municipalities calling on this government to fulfil its promise to our community, the Minister of Transportation refuses to act on the third and final phase of this important link in my community.

We cannot wait one more day. People are refusing to drive on this highway and people are losing their lives. Will the minister rise from his seat today, fulfil his obligation to our community and immediately call for the initiation of the completion of Highway 3?

1140

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by thanking the member from Essex for not only the question today but for, frankly, the advocacy that he has brought to this particular issue.

In his region, I do understand very clearly, this is a vitally important project or initiative that the community is looking at, and I understand the urgency. I've said this many times in the Legislature and, frankly, outside the Legislature: Any time there's a fatality or an injury on a road or a highway anywhere in the province of Ontario, my heart goes out to those involved and to the families of those who are involved. It's one of the reasons that this government, under the leadership of our Premier, has

moved forward so aggressively with a massive transportation infrastructure build-out.

In this particular case, in this particular part of Ontario, I know that the member knows that over the last number of years, our government has invested nearly \$50 million to widen 13 kilometres of this already.

I know that we have more work to do. I understand that, and I'm happy to have a conversation with that member and, frankly, meet with municipal representatives from that community—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The voices of our community couldn't be any clearer: We need that highway widened now. It's a 10-year-old promise that this government made to our community.

I want to quote my predecessor, Bruce Crozier. He said, "The objective of the construction is to increase the safety of the 33-kilometre highway, the region's main artery between Windsor and much of the county, including the towns of Essex, Kingsville and Leamington."

If safety was the priority back when Bruce said it, it is most definitely the priority today.

The road is aptly named after Bruce Crozier. It's called Bruce Crozier Way, due to his efforts to have that section of the highway widened over his tenure of 17 years in this place. Bruce Crozier's way was to stick to your promise, deliver on your promise and do what you say you're going to do. If he were here today, his staff member said, he would be disgusted by the actions of this government and the lack of action.

I call on the minister—I implore the minister—to fulfill his promise, honour Bruce's legacy, get the money flowing to our community and finish Highway 3.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member from Essex for the follow-up question.

I had the opportunity, many years before serving as an MPP, to work here in this building as a staff person. In fact, Mr. Crozier was someone whom I knew well and respected a great deal as, at that point, in my case, a much younger man who had the chance to work here at that time.

I understand profoundly the importance of the advocacy that Bruce Crozier brought to this particular discussion. The reason that we have been in a position to expand the 13 kilometres so far, and to invest the money to widen the highway so far, is because of the advocacy of that member.

I mentioned already in my first answer that I am happy to continue the discussion with that member and with municipal leaders from his community and his region about this particular project, because I understand the importance.

But whether we're talking about this particular region in Essex or any other part of the province, we are investing billions of dollars in highways in every corner of the

province. We will continue to do so, and I sincerely hope that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
New question.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question this morning is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Interjection: Welcome back.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: That's right. Welcome back, Minister. It's wonderful to see you here, back in the House.

Recently, Forbes magazine reported that organizations that are looking for a competitive edge have embraced diversity, and that leading enterprises have managed to tap into employing people with disabilities.

Actually, earlier this morning I had the pleasure of speaking at a conference organized by the Creative Spirit Art Centre in my riding of Davenport, which has done tremendous work to raise awareness of the barriers faced by artists with disabilities, especially employment barriers.

The Forbes report I referred to is an important reminder during National Access Awareness Week, which Ontarians all across the province are marking until June 6. This timing gives us a great opportunity to discuss what the province is doing to improve employment prospects for people with disabilities because, despite progress, we have much work left to be done on this file.

Speaker, through you to the minister, what is this government doing to improve accessibility?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: You've got to get used to that again, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that. And, Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me my first warning this morning. It's evidence, I think, that I'm back, and I'm back here in fighting trim. I know that you probably didn't like doing that.

I want to thank the member for the question. The fact is, Ontario is a global leader in accessibility. We're first in the world to move to a modern regulatory regime that mandates accessibility. We're first in the world requiring staff to be trained on accessibility. We're first in Canada with legislation that sets out clear goals and time frames. And Ontario is currently the only jurisdiction in Canada that has enforceable standards. That being said, there's still much more work to do and very good reasons to do that.

In 2010, the Martin Prosperity Institute indicated that there's \$7.9 billion out there for us to gain in our economy if we're to become more successful.

Mr. Speaker, there's still more work to do and we're determined to do it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I want to thank the minister for that answer as well, and for all the great work that he and his ministry have been doing on this particular file.

As I said, I'm an advocate for people with disabilities, especially with the Creative Spirit Art Centre in my riding—having been at that conference this morning.

Minister, while these achievements are impressive, it seems clear that legal standards will be difficult to implement without full buy-in from the private sector. Lately, I was encouraged to hear that 25% of the largest Canadian public companies indicate an interest in this market. I spoke to you earlier about the artists with disabilities facing employment challenges and what they could actually gain if they were employed—to be able to bring economic value and to bring personal satisfaction to their work. But it's always important to ensure that businesses do not see these standards as too cumbersome.

Minister, what are you doing to ensure—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Thank you to the member for her great advocacy on this issue. She's absolutely right. Business buy-in is absolutely crucial if we're going to be able to drive that cultural shift that's so important for us to move this file ahead.

We're working with businesses and other stakeholders toward the Accessibility Certification Program, which will make it easier for people to identify accessible businesses and celebrate accessible businesses and organizations.

We're also working with our accessibility partners toward supporting a TripAdvisor-like application that allows anyone to rate businesses on their ability to welcome clients with disabilities.

In April we hosted the Accessibility Innovation Showcase, which highlighted technological innovation, so that we can ensure that that innovation helps to level the playing field for people with disabilities in their homes and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, there's still a lot more work to do, but we're determined to make Ontario accessible and to continue our role as a global leader in this area.

DEFERRED VOTES

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION
PLAN ACT (STRENGTHENING
RETIREMENT SECURITY
FOR ONTARIANS), 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE RÉGIME
DE RETRAITE DE LA PROVINCE
DE L'ONTARIO (SÉCURISER LA RETRAITE
EN ONTARIO)

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 186, An Act to establish the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan / Projet de loi 186, Loi établissant le Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1148 to 1153.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members please take your seats. Thank you.

On Wednesday, June 1, 2016, Ms. Hunter moved third reading of Bill 186, An Act to establish the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gates, Wayne	Moridi, Reza
Anderson, Granville	Gélinas, France	Murray, Glen R.
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gravelle, Michael	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Baker, Yvan	Gretzky, Lisa	Naqvi, Yasir
Ballard, Chris	Hatfield, Percy	Natyshak, Taras
Bisson, Gilles	Hoggarth, Ann	Oraziotti, David
Bradley, James J.	Horwath, Andrea	Potts, Arthur
Campbell, Sarah	Hoskins, Eric	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chan, Michael	Hunter, Mitzie	Rinaldi, Lou
Chiarelli, Bob	Kiwala, Sophie	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Singh, Jagmeet
Crack, Grant	Leal, Jeff	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	MacCharles, Tracy	Tabuns, Peter
Del Duca, Steven	Malhi, Harinder	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Taylor, Monique
Dhillon, Vic	Mantha, Michael	Thibeault, Glenn
Dickson, Joe	Martins, Cristina	Vanthof, John
Dong, Han	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Duguid, Brad	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Eleanor	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David
Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.	
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Paul	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Barrett, Toby	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Brown, Patrick	MacLeod, Lisa	Thompson, Lisa M.
Clark, Steve	Martow, Gila	Walker, Bill
Coe, Lorne	McDonell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	
Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 70; the nays are 25.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

ENERGY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2016 LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT DES LOIS SUR L'ÉNERGIE

Deferred vote on the motion that the question be now put on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning / Projet de loi 135, Loi modifiant plusieurs lois et abrogeant plusieurs règlements en ce qui concerne la conservation de l'énergie et la planification énergétique à long terme.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1157 to 1158.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On May 5, 2016, Mr. Chiarelli moved third reading of Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning.

Madame Lalonde has moved that the question be now put. All those in favour of Ms. Lalonde's motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Murray, Glen R.
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Chan, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Oraziotti, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Kwinter, Monte	Potts, Arthur
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Qaadri, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sandals, Liz
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Thibeault, Glenn
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Vernile, Daiene
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick
Barrett, Toby	Hatfield, Percy	Pettapiece, Randy
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Brown, Patrick	Hudak, Tim	Singh, Jagmeet
Campbell, Sarah	Jones, Sylvia	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Tabuns, Peter
Coe, Lorne	MacLeod, Lisa	Taylor, Monique
Fedeli, Victor	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fife, Catherine	Martow, Gila	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	McDonell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 54; the nays are 42.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Chiarelli has moved third reading of Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1201 to 1202.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Murray, Glen R.
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Chan, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Oraziotti, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Kwinter, Monte	Potts, Arthur
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Qaadri, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sandals, Liz
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Thibeault, Glenn
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Vernile, Daiene
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick
Barrett, Toby	Hatfield, Percy	Pettapiece, Randy
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Brown, Patrick	Hudak, Tim	Singh, Jagmeet
Campbell, Sarah	Jones, Sylvia	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Tabuns, Peter
Coe, Lorne	MacLeod, Lisa	Taylor, Monique
Fedeli, Victor	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fife, Catherine	Martow, Gila	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	McDonell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 54; the nays are 42.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1205 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: We will be joined today by members of the Italian Fallen Workers Memorial committee. They're here today to listen to a statement about Italian fallen workers. They come from the riding of Eglinton-Lawrence. Their names are Marino Toppan,

Fulvio Florio, Mario Marra, Gino Cucchi and Palmacchio Di Iulio. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Gila Martow: Well, it's kind of an exciting day, because I've been involved in Thornhill politics for many years, and people know that I've been questioning when the Yonge subway expansion is going to start moving a little forward. There was a great announcement this morning: \$55 million toward the planning of it. Unfortunately, there's no timeline. There are no dates set. All of a sudden, we have to have the downtown relief line built, which will take 14 years, before we can have the Yonge subway.

I'm asking if this government has discussed the possibility, which many experts have recommended, of a Yonge subway express route which would tunnel under the existing Yonge subway, as is done in many other cities, like Seoul, Korea. It would stop only at major stops along the way. It would be very fast. Maybe they could charge extra for it. It would stop at, say, Union, Bloor, the Eglinton LRT, Sheppard and, of course, up in Richmond Hill.

We all know that a Yonge subway expansion would get tens of thousands of commuters off our roads. Maybe we need to reallocate, as I've been begging, money that's being spent on very low-priority bus lanes. They're even starting, unfortunately, to build bus lanes on Bathurst and Centre Street for a little jog that will actually make the Highway 7 Rapidway longer for commuters, which is really counterintuitive and counterproductive.

Mr. Speaker, I'm excited that we're at least talking about the Yonge subway, but let's stop talking. Let's get the money for high-priority projects. Let's get those shovels in the ground and the tunnels underground and get to work.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: Last week, I met with a group of mothers in my riding of Hamilton Mountain. They had one thing in common: They have children on the autism spectrum.

I have to tell you, Speaker, that their experience is very different from the picture that this government tries to paint. These are parents who know their children can thrive with IBI therapy. If they're already receiving IBI therapy, they know, because they have seen the results, even after just a few short months. If they haven't had the opportunity to start IBI, they know because they have faith in the professionals they work with, who have told them that their child needs IBI therapy.

Despite what this government tries to say, their children and thousands of other children across Ontario are

being transitioned off the wait-list for IBI with no information about what their future holds. Eight thousand dollars only gets them two or three months of the therapy that they need and that is recognized by the professionals.

I stand here today and once again I plead don't leave these kids behind. They were told by professionals that this was the therapy they needed—the ideal candidate, some were told—and then told, weeks later, that they are no longer eligible, just because they're over the age of five.

I say to the members opposite, stop repeating the same tired lines, listen to your constituents, grandfather these children and ensure that they get the therapy that they need.

DON ROSS

Mr. Joe Dickson: I would like to share with you a story about an Ajax hero. Don Ross passed away peacefully on Sunday, April 3, 2016, at the age of 85, the adored husband of Valerie and predeceased by his first wife, Shirley, née Leggatt; survived by his brother Murdoch and sisters Eunice and Elsie; proud father to Donna, Gary, Glen, Larry, Shawn and Kevin; and grandfather and great-grandfather to many.

I knew Don virtually all of my life, as he dedicated four nights a week for almost 40 years training and guiding young boxing athletes and seeing their progress. His wife and family came first, and he also took a great deal of personal pride in working with youth and seeing them grow, for almost no money at all.

Don was a hard-working employee at DuPont Ajax for some 35 years before retiring.

He was a true Ajax volunteer. There was a family celebration of Don's life at our Legion, where hundreds of Ajacians created an overflow crowd that you simply could not move in. This man who moved mountains made these youth grow every day in personal stature.

In 1991, five delegates were selected for the Canadian Boxing Hall of Fame. The first name mentioned that day was Don Ross of Ajax, Ontario. He was recommended by several noted boxers, and it seemed to be a record at the time, as the entire body of officials unanimously sanctioned, by their approval, to welcome Don Ross into the Canadian Boxing Hall of Fame in 1991. His efforts had won him Ontario and Canadian acclaim. On that day, time stood still as his peers unanimously honoured him, Don Ross, forever.

May God bless you, Don. We miss you.

AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm honoured to rise today in recognition of ALS Awareness Month and in support of individuals and their families living with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. There are as many as 3,000 Canadians currently living with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, named after one of baseball's all-time greatest players, who died of ALS in June 1941.

The ALS Society of Canada, together with provincial chapters and support groups, raise funds in their community during the month of June through different campaigns, from planting blue cornflowers—which is the official international flower of hope for ALS—to the ALS bucket challenges, the ALS hike-and-cycle, or one of the 90 walks happening across Canada. Treatments have been developed for other difficult diseases, and we believe it will be developed for ALS.

I was proud to see many people participating in these campaigns and giving hope to the people living with this dreadful disease. A number of my esteemed colleagues—Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli, Perth-Wellington MPP Randy Pettapiece, Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott and others, including myself—took part in the bucket challenge. It was all because of your spirit that the Canadians helped to raise a combined \$26 million for ALS last year. But the fight must go on. I myself will be attending the Warton Walk for ALS this coming Saturday.

Time is of the essence. I ask all members to once again give their support to the individuals, families, health care professionals, researchers and volunteers to continue to be champions for ALS so the dream of finding a cure soon becomes a reality.

MERCURY POISONING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: In 2012, 42 years after the mercury poisoning of the English-Wabigoon river system came to light, Premier Wynne was Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. She visited Grassy Narrows, expressed deep concern about the situation there and promised to make it right. She established an Ontario/Grassy Narrows Mercury Working Group to get to the bottom of the continuing contamination and whether or not remediation of the river was possible.

Four years later, she's Premier and the working group has assembled a body of scientific work of the highest calibre that establishes that the contamination is a real and continuing threat to human health. Also, as of this week, the scientific report submitted to the working group that the Premier herself established proved that the mercury contamination can and should be remediated—that something can and must be done about it.

Yet, despite that report being delivered to her government more than a month ago, she claimed in question period on Monday that she had not seen the report and didn't "know the source of the report"—again, the report commissioned by the working group that she herself established.

How can we take the Premier seriously when she talks about reconciliation with First Nations in this province and she refuses to commit to an immediate cleanup of the mercury contamination affecting the people of Grassy Narrows? Will there be yet another generation of Grassy Narrows children who grow up to be contaminated by mercury? Will the Premier let this happen on her watch?

1310

FRANCO-FÊTE

M^{me} Daiene Vernile: J'aimerais vous parler aujourd'hui d'une manifestation culturelle fantastique dans ma communauté de Kitchener-Waterloo. Il s'agit d'un pique-nique annuel, la Franco-fête, qui aura lieu le 26 juin, cette année.

Bien que cette activité se déroule en français, tous les francophiles y sont invités. Au cours de cette activité, les gens se regroupent pour écouter des artistes francophones et pour déguster des mets typiques des régions de la francophonie. Les enfants s'amuse à des jeux et à des sports. De plus, on y fait la vente de livres en français.

Cette fête est organisée par l'Association des francophones de Kitchener-Waterloo, qui a célébré notamment le 400^e anniversaire de la présence francophone en Ontario en 2015. Cette association très dynamique propose de nombreuses activités de tous les genres et pour tous les goûts : clubs de marche, de cuisine et de lecture, par exemple.

Bref, j'ai très hâte de participer à ce pique-nique annuel, et je souhaite à tous les francophones et francophiles de ma communauté une très joyeuse Franco-fête.

CELTIC HERITAGE

Mr. Jim McDonell: There's an old saying back home that Ontario starts in SD&G, and in particular Glengarry county.

The area was originally settled by Scottish immigrants from Scotland and Scottish United Empire Loyalists who were forced to relocate after the war of independence.

The SD&G Highlanders, Canada's oldest regiment, originated back in the Highlands as the Glengarry Fencibles, settled in Glengarry county under the leadership of Bishop Alexander Macdonell, and were mobilized to play a crucial role in the War of 1812 and all of Canada's military actions since.

Today, the Celtic culture remains strong and vibrant in Glengarry. In fact, in 2003, a study reported that the percentage of young and old who are involved in Celtic music or dance dwarfs that of Cape Breton. The MacCulloch Scottish dancers continue to perform for audiences around the world. The Glengarry Highland Games have the North American Pipe Band Championships. And the Williamstown Fair, which is Canada's and likely North America's oldest fair, keeps our Celtic history front and centre each year.

Each Tuesday night in July, the Glengarry Celtic Music Hall of Fame hosts a free ceilidh at the Williamstown centre, where fiddlers, pipers and other musicians and dancers gather for informal jam sessions and refreshments.

Last week, I attended their annual induction dinner, where Neil MacDonell, David MacPhee, the Glen Orchestra, the MacQueen Family and John Paul Vachon were all inducted into the hall, joining a long list of

Glengarrians who have kept the traditions alive for more than 200 years. It was once again a sold-out affair with great food, great company and, of course, great Celtic music, singing and dancing. I want to congratulate President Isabel Clark and her team on another great event.

ALDO BOCCIA

Mr. Mike Colle: Today I'd like to honour a philanthropic superstar. He's our local dentist at Dufferin and Lawrence, and his name is Dr. Aldo Boccia. He is a proud member of the Toronto Earlscourt Rotary Club. He has raised millions of dollars for the Bloorview MacMillan centre for children who need special rehabilitation. He has raised money for his local church. He has raised money for St. Joseph's hospital. He is, again, an incredible, community-minded leader.

He has just been awarded two prestigious awards: the Humanitarian Service Award from the Alpha Omega fraternity, which is an international fraternity of dentists; and he's also been awarded, by the Ontario Dental Association, the Barnabas Day Award for Distinguished Service.

Dr. Boccia never stops donating and raising money for his community, along with his super-powerful wife, Peggy. They are amazing examples.

He's most proud of being a Rotarian. As he says all the time, "Service above self."

We praise this amazing philanthropic superstar, Dr. Aldo Boccia, and hopefully, he will continue to do this for decades to come.

CYCLING

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I was proud that in 2014, my private member's bill declaring June as Ontario Bike Month passed in this Legislature.

It's an exciting time for cyclists in our province. Just this morning, I had the pleasure of attending the all-party cycling caucus with colleagues from all sides of the House as we enjoyed a bike ride around Queen's Park.

Ontario Bike Month recognizes and celebrates the growing popularity of cycling in communities, the economic, environmental and health benefits of cycling, and encourages Ontarians to enjoy the beauty of our province and the joy that comes with cycling. With our province's \$25-million investment in cycling infrastructure, including \$15 million to create safer, more connected provincial bicycling routes, cycling is becoming a more attractive transportation and recreation choice for many.

Now more Ontarians than ever are choosing to ride their bikes on a regular basis, with an estimated 600,000 Ontarians, or 5% of us, riding daily. Many communities across Ontario, including my own, are celebrating Bike Month with bicycling activities such as bike-to-work and bike-to-school campaigns throughout the month of June. Burlington alone has seen a 600% increase from last year in the number of schools participating in bike-to-school activities.

Also in my riding, the Burlington Cycling Committee hosted cycling seminars throughout the community to promote bike safety and maintenance for all ages, free of charge. I'm thrilled to see this increasing recognition amongst our provincial government and all Ontarians about the growing importance of cycling.

Finally, I invite all of my colleagues to participate in the Share the Road Cycling Coalition's #ridetheriding social media campaign and enjoy a bike ride with cyclists in their riding this summer. Let's celebrate June on two wheels.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PATIENTS FIRST ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016

DONNANT LA PRIORITÉ AUX PATIENTS

Mr. Hoskins moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 210, An Act to amend various Acts in the interest of patient-centred care / Projet de loi 210, Loi modifiant diverses lois dans l'intérêt des soins axés sur les patients.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: This bill would make amendments to the Local Health System Integration Act, 2006, and various other acts to expand the mandate of local health integration networks to make LHINs accountable for primary care planning, responsible for the management and delivery of home care, and formalize linkages between LHINs and public health units.

BRAIN TUMOUR AWARENESS MONTH AMENDMENT ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE MOIS DE LA SENSIBILISATION AUX TUMEURS CÉRÉBRALES

Mr. Ballard moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 211, An Act to amend the Brain Tumour Awareness Month Act, 2001 / Projet de loi 211, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur le Mois de la sensibilisation aux tumeurs cérébrales.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm pleased to rise today to introduce first reading of this bill, the Brain Tumour Awareness Month Amendment Act, 2016. The bill would amend the Brain Tumour Awareness Month Act by proclaiming the month of May as Brain Tumour Awareness Month.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ITALIAN FALLEN WORKERS MEMORIAL

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Buon giorno a tutti. On a very, very cold April 28, I had the honour of attending the dedication of a memorial here in Toronto with some excellent people who I hadn't met before, but who were doing a wonderful thing that day.

1320

On that day, I met Marino Toppan, Fulvio Florio, Mario Marra, Gino Cucchi and Pal Di Iulio. What they were doing on that day was dedicating a memorial in the city of Toronto to the approximately 1,000 Italian workers who were killed on the job in Canada in the past 100 years.

It's so appropriate on June 2, which, as you'll know, is il Giorno della Repubblica Italiana. It's Italian Republic Day and I think we should honour that, because it's such an appropriate day to do what we're doing today.

The committee for the Italian Fallen Workers Memorial constructed this monument to rightly honour the tremendous sacrifice Italian Canadian workers have made in building this province that we all love and call home. These people deserve to be recognized. They should be recognized. They came to Canada, as did many other immigrants—they did and they still do—and they're simply looking for a better life. They were willing to do work that others would not. They were willing to do work that too often was very hazardous, but they were doing it in order to achieve a better life for themselves and for their families and children.

The names on the memorial that was dedicated that day represent much more than a list of those who were lost. They were human beings. They were loved and they themselves loved. They hoped and they dreamed. They built our province's railways, they built our bridges, they worked in mines, they dug up our tunnels and they constructed the roadways we drive on today.

From the start of their immigration to Canada in the 19th century, often under very harsh conditions, to playing the predominant role that they do in the construction industry in the latter half of the 20th century, Italian Canadians have built this province with their sweat and with their spirit. They sacrificed for their families and too often they sacrificed their own lives due to unsafe working conditions. They are a huge part of our province's and our very country's heritage.

While we remember those we've lost in the past, we also must remember there are those who could be lost in

the future. It's an excellent time to recommit ourselves to simply eliminating workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities for all Canadians and Ontarians.

We know that these incidents are preventable. We know we all have a role to play in ensuring they are prevented; it doesn't matter if you work in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, in an office, in a mine, on a construction site or in a school. We were again reminded of this yesterday during Injured Workers' Day.

As we continue to build our province up, we also need to do what the fallen workers memorial committee wants us to do. We need to build a culture of prevention, in which workplace deaths and injuries are not acceptable and where safety is always a top priority, because one injury or one fatality is just one too many.

The memorial that was dedicated that day is a living reminder that when workplaces are unsafe, families suffer, people lose friends, co-workers are traumatized and companies lose both money and their own reputations.

Speaker, we're committed to building health and safety in all of Ontario, working with men and women throughout this province. It's a shared responsibility. But no matter how much training we bring in, no matter how much legislation, how we mandate that training or how many fines we issue, if the rules aren't followed on the ground by the companies, or sometimes by the workers themselves, and if workers aren't looking out for each other, it all goes for naught. We need to be in this together. Lives are at stake.

The Italian Fallen Workers Memorial is a sobering reminder of the duty we have to each other. It's a reminder of those who lost their lives ensuring that we have the province we have today. Today, with these gentlemen in attendance, let us remember those who worked hard building this province up to what it is, those who paid the ultimate price, and let us remember that we've got a lot more work to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses?

Mr. Ted Arnott: On April 28, I had the opportunity to attend a very moving day of mourning observance at the WSIB offices, which was organized by the chair of the WSIB, Elizabeth Witmer. That same afternoon, I was honoured to represent our leader, Patrick Brown, and my colleagues in the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus at the formal unveiling of the Italian Fallen Workers Memorial, unveiled to the city on the day recognized worldwide as being dedicated to the victims of work-related injuries. I was glad to join the Minister of Labour at both of those events, and I appreciated the fact that he acknowledged my presence at the second one.

Located at the Columbus Centre here in Toronto, the memorial is made up of 11 columns which represent the decades since 1900 and bear the names of fallen workers of Italian heritage discovered by a committee of volunteer researchers over the last six years. The contribution of Italian Canadians has had a vast impact in the building of this great nation and our great province. However, until the dedication of this memorial, those losses were an unrecognized part of that legacy and our history. These Italian Canadian workers literally laid the

foundation for our prosperity, and they are now being honoured for their sacrifice.

While organizers originally estimated finding between 300 to 400 names, they've uncovered over 944 verified names of victims of workplace fatalities for people of Italian origin in Ontario and over a thousand names in total. Subsequent names will be added annually.

To the families of these fallen workers, I say, *Partecipo al tuo dolore*. I share your sadness.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank Marino Toppa, the activity coordinator for the project; Nick Pinto, who was involved in a memorial in Vaughan; and Villa Charities Inc., which played a key role in the memorial project. I also want to recognize our former colleague Joe Cordiano, who I understand was instrumental in the project as well.

While this memorial reminds us of the many Canadians of Italian heritage who have been tragically killed in the workplace, it's also a powerful tool so that we cannot forget about all Canadians who died in the workplace.

I remember my shock and horror when I first read about the two Brampton men killed in separate workplace incidents on May 10. On the day a boom lift type of vehicle crushed a 20-year-old construction worker at a new housing development, a lawn-cutting machine rolled over a 77-year-old worker at a golf course. Unfortunately, incidents like these are all too frequent across Canada.

This past April 21, I stood in this House to discuss the number of workplace deaths in Canada. According to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, in 2014 there were 919 workplace deaths recorded in Canada, and that's up from 902 in 2013. This represents an average of more than two deaths on the job each and every day across the country. From 1995 to 2014, over 18,000 people lost their lives due to work-related causes across Canada, an average of 918 deaths per year. In Ontario alone, 226 workers reportedly lost their lives in 2015 due to workplace tragedies or occupational disease.

What's even more tragic is that it's estimated that 90% of these workplace deaths are entirely preventable.

The day of mourning is also an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to ensure that all our workplaces are safe. As MPPs, we must work together to improve workplace safety, with the goal of preventing any death or injury in the workplace. We have a responsibility to ensure that workplace safety is a priority and that our workplaces become safer, not more hazardous.

One of the speakers at the fallen workers memorial was a woman who had been widowed by a workplace accident in 2009. In her address, she stated that the best way to honour the men and women on the memorial is for everyone to remember and remain committed to worker safety in all workplaces. We must do this, not only for these fallen Italian Canadians, but for all Ontario workers whose lives have been cut short by workplace accidents.

I'd again like to thank the organizers and volunteers behind the Italian Fallen Workers Memorial. I think the timing is especially important because this month we mark the beginning of Italian Heritage Month.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I am running out of time, but I want to again express my view that we need to do more to make our workplaces safer.

I want to express my appreciation to my colleague the member for Nipissing, Vic Fedeli, for his thoughts and his contribution to the remarks that I prepared for this afternoon, as well as to a volunteer who has been working in my office for the last three weeks, Tim McIntosh, who's joining me here, who helped me organize my thoughts this afternoon.

Once again, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further responses?
1330

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It is an honour to rise today on behalf of the Ontario New Democratic Party and our leader, Andrea Horwath, to speak about fallen Italian workers and the monument project to honour those workers. On a personal note, I am particularly proud of this project and the wide support that it has from my union, the union that I belong to: LIUNA, the Laborers' International Union of North America.

Speaker, you may know that I spent close to 10 years in the field as a construction worker prior to entering politics. I had the good fortune to work with many Italian Canadians. They taught me a lot. They taught me a lot about hard work, how to do the job right and to take pride in the work. You see evidence of that work for generations all across this province, and I'm certainly proud to be a part of that history.

My riding of Essex can boast that approximately 20% of residents claim some level of Italian ancestry, and that is evident in just about every community one might visit in Essex county. From wineries to greenhouses, farms and factories, Italian immigrants have built successful businesses and are leaders who continue to contribute and make our riding a great place to live and raise a family.

The history of Italian workers in Canada is deeply textured, however. It is a story of enduring hardship, of leaving family and loved ones behind, of coming to a place where you don't speak the language, and even enduring bigotry and being treated like second-class citizens. Italian immigration to Canada began in the late 1800s, with most arriving between the period of 1900 and the First World War. Like other European countries, Italy was targeted by labour recruitment campaigns on behalf of the railroad, mining and forestry industries. There was a strong need for labour from Europe as our country continued to grow and the railways opened up the West to settlement.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And the north.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: And the north.

While expecting an opportunity to work and prosper, this wasn't always the case, and many immigrants were victims of unscrupulous recruiters and were exploited. In some cases, Italian workers were traded like commodities. They found themselves sent to labour camps in northern Ontario, indefinitely. Seeking an opportunity for a more prosperous life for themselves and their families,

many Italian men left the Old World for the New World and made a perilous journey across the North Atlantic. Most landed in the US first and then came to Canada.

When they arrived in Canada, they found themselves doing gruelling work in unimaginable conditions. The dangers were ever-present. At that time in our history, workers being maimed and killed was largely looked at as the cost of doing business, the cost of building a nation. Whether it was on a railway or the Great Plains or deep in a mine in northern Ontario or on a construction site in downtown Montreal, Italian immigrants sacrificed their time, their bodies and even their lives.

It is fitting that these workers who have given so much to make Canada what it is today are honoured with a memorial, as we should always honour all workers who make the ultimate sacrifice while simply trying to provide for themselves and their families. It's also fitting that we honour the over 830 names on the monument here in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and that we use this opportunity to remind ourselves that one worker killed is one too many and to remind ourselves that in this place we have the power to enact laws which mean that fewer workers will leave in the morning and never return home to their loved ones. In thinking about this statement, I am reminded of the message from the annual National Day of Mourning: We must mourn the dead and fight like hell for the living.

On behalf of my riding of Essex, I want to thank the committee members who dedicated their time and energy to see this project through to completion: Marino Toppan, Gino Cucchi, Fulvio Florio, Fortunato Rao, Mario Marra, Odoardo di Santo, Paola Breda and Pal Di Ulio. Thank you, and congratulations to you all.

I would also like to thank the donors and the sponsors, Speaker. That list is far too long for the time that I have here today, but they all know who they are and I want to thank them again. I would also like to invite every Ontarian to visit the memorial at the Columbus Centre here in Toronto and to pay their respects to these Italian Canadians who lost their lives on the job. Lastly, I'd like to thank the families of the workers who have perished for enduring the loss. On behalf of the Ontario NDP caucus and our leader, Andrea Horwath, we offer our condolences and our commitment to continue to fight for every worker to come home after their shift.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Lorne Coe: "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician

services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

I agree with the contents, Speaker. I will affix my signature and provide it to page Thomas.

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Michael Mantha: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario does not have a strategy on Lyme disease; and

“Whereas the Public Health Agency of Canada is developing an Action Plan on Lyme Disease; and

“Whereas Toronto Public Health says that transmission of the disease requires the tick to be attached for 24 hours, so early intervention and diagnosis is of primary importance; and

“Whereas a motion was introduced to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario encouraging the government to adopt a strategy on Lyme disease, while taking into account the impact the disease has upon individuals and families in Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to develop an integrated strategy on Lyme disease consistent with the action plan of the Public Health Agency of Canada, taking into account available treatments, accessibility issues and the efficacy of the currently available diagnostic mechanisms. In so doing, it should consult with representatives of the health care community and patients’ groups within one year.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to page Waleed to bring it down to the Clerks’ table.

ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

Mr. Arthur Potts: I’m delighted to bring a petition from thousands of people in my community and across Ontario and the GTA relating to vaping.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bill 45, schedule 3, Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2015 needs significant amendment to allow the existing industry the fair ability to function and serve those who choose vaping as a harm reduction option to tobacco products or a method to eliminate addiction to nicotine;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Definitions: ‘Vaper’ is a user of electronic cigarettes as defined by Bill 45, section 3 and ‘vaping’ is the use of electronic cigarettes as defined by Bill 45, section 3.

“To repeal item 3(1) ‘No person shall, in any place where electronic cigarettes are sold or offered for sale, display or permit the display of electronic cigarettes in any manner that would permit a consumer to view or handle an electronic cigarette before purchasing it.’ This item is tantamount to banning personal vaporizers outright as there are hundreds of styles, types and brands and modular components. This will effectively mean that most potential vapers will continue to smoke tobacco cigarettes for lack of ability to choose a product, and existing vapers will be unable to keep abreast of new products as they emerge, possibly causing them to return to smoking as well. Literature cannot sufficiently replace the ability to see and touch a product;

“And to repeal item 3(2) ‘No person shall promote electronic cigarettes,

“(a) in any place where electronic cigarettes or tobacco products are offered for sale;”

“Harm reduction has proven to work and should be promoted, especially in places where people go to seek freedom from deadly tobacco addiction, as such places as Insite reduce harm for intravenous drug users by lessening the chance of dying as a result of addiction. The argument for section 3(1), the ability to make informed choices within the places that sell, or exclusively sell, vaping products applies as well.

“To amend 10(1) ‘No person shall use an electronic cigarette in any enclosed public place or enclosed workplace.’ With no scientific evidence that suggests that second-hand vapour from vaping devices is harmful and studies demonstrate that there is no danger to public health, the choice of allowing vaping in establishments and workplaces should be at the discretion of the business owner. A specific exemption for establishments that exclusively sell vaping products is absolutely necessary for the purpose of demonstrating products.”

I agree with this petition and I sign my name to it.

1340

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

“Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

I’m happy to affix my signature.

The member opposite’s petition must have been in very tiny font.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the provincial government has cancelled the Northlander passenger train which served the residents of northeastern Ontario; and

“Whereas the provincial government has closed bus stations and is cancelling bus routes despite promising enhanced bus services to replace the train; and

“Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC) has been given a mandate that its motor coach division must be self-sustaining; and

“Whereas Metrolinx, the crown corporation that provides train and bus service in the GTA ... is subsidized by more than \$100 million annually; and

“Whereas the subsidy to Metrolinx has increased annually for the last seven years;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To direct the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to reverse the decision to cancel bus routes immediately and to treat northerners equitably in decisions regarding public transportation.”

I wholeheartedly agree and send it down with page Alexandra.

TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: J’aimerais lire une pétition adressée à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario.

« Attendu qu’il y a un besoin criant en infrastructure de transport routier dans la province de l’Ontario;

« Attendu que d’offrir différentes alternatives ou options dans le choix du mode de transport aux citoyens aide à réduire le nombre de voitures sur les routes;

« Attendu que les transports en commun contribuent à améliorer la qualité de vie des Ontariens ainsi qu’à préserver l’environnement;

« Attendu que les résidents d’Orléans et de l’est d’Ottawa ont besoin d’une plus grande infrastructure de transport;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Soutenir le plan Faire progresser l’Ontario et la construction de la phase II du train léger sur rail (TLR), ce qui contribuera à répondre aux besoins criants en infrastructure de transport à Orléans, à l’est d’Ottawa et à travers la province. »

Il me fait plaisir de supporter et de signer cette pétition, madame la Présidente.

HIGHWAY RAMPS

Mrs. Julia Munro: “Whereas the town of Bradford West Gwillimbury will continue to have robust growth of population and commercial activity in proximity to the Holland Marsh, Ontario’s salad bowl, which consists of 7,000 acres of specialty crop area lands designated in the provincial Greenbelt Plan and is situated along the municipal boundary between King township and the town of Bradford West Gwillimbury;

“Whereas the Canal Road ramps at Highway 400 provide critical access for farm operations within the Holland Marsh allowing for efficient transport of product to market, delivery of materials and equipment and patronage of on-farm commercial activities; and

“Whereas the loss of that critical access to Highway 400 may threaten the significant financial benefits that the Holland Marsh contributes to the Ontario economy;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the council of the corporation of the town of Bradford West Gwillimbury hereby advises the Honourable Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation, that the town does not support the elimination of the Canal Road ramps at Highway 400, and further, that the town requests that the duration of the temporary closure of Canal Road between Wist Road and Davis Road be minimized to the greatest extent possible during the Highway 400/North Canal bridges replacement project.”

I have affixed my signature as I am in complete agreement.

CAREGIVERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition that comes from all over Ontario, and they keep coming—I would say thousands of names, probably more. It reads as follows:

“Whereas there are over 2.6 million caregivers to a family member, a friend or a neighbour in Ontario;

“Whereas these caregivers work hard to provide care to those that are most in need even though their efforts are often overlooked;

“Whereas one third of informal caregivers are distressed, which is twice as many as four years ago;

“Whereas without these caregivers, the health care system and patients would greatly suffer in Ontario;”

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support MPP Gélinas’s bill”—my bill—“to proclaim the first Tuesday of every April as Family Caregiver Day to increase recognition and awareness of family caregivers in Ontario.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask my good page Daniel to bring it to the Clerk.

GOVERNMENT ANTI-RACISM PROGRAMS

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This is a petition supporting the Anti-Racism Directorate.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontarians are concerned that individual, systemic and cultural racism continues to create unfair outcomes for racial minorities in Ontario;

“Whereas the time has come to remove the social and economic barriers that prevent our province from achieving true equality;

“Whereas in order to accomplish that objective and to tackle racism in all its forms, our government has created the new Anti-Racism Directorate;

“We, the undersigned, acknowledge both our support for the concept behind the Anti-Racism Directorate, and recognize that there is still work to be done to build an inclusive Ontario where everyone, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or cultural background, has an equal opportunity to succeed.

“Therefore, we petition the government to work with key partners, such as businesses, community organizations, educational institutions and the Ontario Human Rights Commission in an effort to create a scope for the Anti-Racism Directorate....”

I agree with this petition and I shall sign it.

CORMORANTS

Mr. Rick Nicholls: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the noticeable increase in the numbers of cormorants in the Rondeau Bay and Eriau regions of Lake Erie has raised concerns regarding the impact on game species, the forage base, the vegetation, as well as on other colonial water birds;

“Whereas cormorants are opportunistic predators whose diets have a significant impact on fisheries, with estimates that a colony of 4,000 birds consuming a minimum of one pound per day would equal two tonnes of fish daily;

“Whereas cormorant guano is acidic and can change soil chemistry which can kill ground vegetation and damage nesting trees;

“Whereas cormorants also destroy vegetation directly by stripping leaves and small branches from trees which can lead to increased erosion along shorelines;

“Whereas cormorants tend to be attracted to the nesting sites of other colonial water birds, which may impact other colonial water bird species such as gulls, terns, egrets and herons;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry take the necessary steps to minimize the negative effects the cormorant colony is having on the Rondeau-Eriau region.”

I approve of this petition and affix my name.

PRIX DE L'ESSENCE

M. Taras Natyshak: J'ai le plaisir d'introduire une pétition à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario, qui dit :

« Alors que les automobilistes du nord de l'Ontario » et autour de l'Ontario « continuent d'être soumis à des fluctuations marquées dans le prix de l'essence; et

« Alors que la province pourrait éliminer les prix abusifs et opportunistes et offrir des prix justes, stables et prévisibles; et

« Alors que cinq provinces et de nombreux états américains ont déjà une réglementation des prix d'essence; et

« Considérant que les juridictions qui réglementent le prix de l'essence ont : moins de fluctuations des prix, moins d'écarts de prix entre les communautés urbaines et rurales et des prix d'essence annualisés inférieurs;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« D'accorder à la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario le mandat de surveiller le prix de l'essence partout en Ontario afin de réduire la volatilité des prix et les différences de prix régionales, tout en encourageant la concurrence. »

J'appuie cette pétition, et je vais y affixer ma signature.

1350

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AMENDMENT ACT (DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS), 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DU POISSON ET DE LA FAUNE (CORMORANS À AIGRETTES)

Mr. Bailey moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 205, An Act to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 205, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la protection du poisson et de la faune.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's an honour to stand in the Legislature today and have the opportunity to present Bill 205, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Amendment Act, for its second reading debate.

Bill 205, in essence, is a straightforward bill. Currently, section 5(1) of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act states, "A person shall not hunt or trap specially protected wildlife or any bird that belongs to a species that is wild by nature and is not a game bird." This section creates protections for all birds that are not otherwise protected by the federal Migratory Birds Convention Act.

Bill 205 amends the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1997 to permit the hunting and trapping of double-crested cormorants. This amendment to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act places double-crested cormorants in a category of birds along with the American crow, the brown-headed cowbird, the common grackle, the house sparrow, the red-winged blackbird and starling that section 5(1) does not apply to.

Madam Speaker, after researching this issue, speaking with stakeholders and considering the potential impact of this amendment, I believe that this is an appropriate and reasonable response to the issue of the rapid double-crested cormorant population growth in the Great Lakes region.

I look forward to all of the comments on Bill 205 today. I've had many conversations with my colleagues in the official opposition regarding the impact of these birds on the delicate ecosystems in their ridings. I'm also very interested to hear the comments from both the members of the government and the members of the third party, because I know that the double-crested cormorants are also having a major impact in many of their ridings as well.

The idea of this particular amendment of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act had been put forward during previous Legislatures by the former Liberal member for Algoma-Manitoulin Michael Brown in 2001, and the Liberal member from Prince Edward-Hastings Ernie Parsons in 2006. In the decade since those members first brought forward the issue of overpopulation, the double-crested cormorant population has exploded. This is stressing delicate ecosystems, impacting biodiversity and creating concerns for property owners and the fishing and tourism industry throughout the Great Lakes region. I also understand it's very damaging to the islands here just off Toronto. On Toronto Island, the people who boat in the harbour tell me that this is causing a lot of damage to a number of properties and to the islands there.

The double-crested cormorant, or the crow duck, is a large fish-eating bird found throughout the Great Lakes region, as well as large swaths of North America. A fact

sheet issued by Environment Canada indicates that historically, the double-crested cormorant did not nest originally in the Great Lakes region. Evidence of double-crested cormorants around the Great Lakes did not appear until sometime around 1913, along the very western edge of Lake Superior. The nesting colonies of these large predatory birds continued to spread east to the Great Lakes, making it to the St. Lawrence River valley by 1945. In the 1950s, the number of double-crested cormorants in Ontario numbered at about 900 nesting pairs. By 1973, that number had dropped by 86% to approximately 125 nesting pairs. Scientists at that time believed that the decline in the cormorant population was a result of the high levels of toxic contaminants such as DDT and PCBs that were present at that time in the Great Lakes.

At the same time, the Great Lakes themselves were experiencing a change in fish populations as a result of many factors, including the decline of large predatory fish and also the introduction of invasive species and, again, the presence of toxic contaminants in the lakes. As a result of this, governments of both Canada and the United States, including the province of Ontario, began to pass legislation which banned the use of a lot of these types of pesticides, while also passing legislation to improve the overall water qualities in the Great Lakes region.

Six decades, or 60 years, later, we're all thankful that the leaders of the day saw fit to take those actions that they did to protect the Great Lakes, our greatest natural resource. But, as a result of this confluence of factors—the banning of toxic pesticides, the steadily increasing numbers of smaller fish in the Great Lakes and the seemingly hands-off approach to population management by the MNRs of different governments—population numbers of the double-crested cormorant rebounded quickly from the 1970s through to the 1990s, and have exploded even more so in recent years.

From that original group of 125 nesting pairs in 1973, the most readily available government of Canada statistics from 2009 indicated that there were more than 58,000 nesting pairs in the Great Lakes. Some bird count surveys suggest that the population increase may be happening at the rate of 7% a year, which would be unsustainable if that is the case. And from the numbers, that probably is the case.

As a result of the rapid recovery and population explosion of the double-crested cormorant, the federal Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada has listed this bird as "not at risk" since April 1978. Various other national and international conservation groups, such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, Wings Over Water and Wild Species Canada, all list the status of the double-crested cormorant as "least of concern" or "not at risk" or "secure." This is obviously a testament to the resiliency of this species of bird. In only a few short decades, the double-crested cormorant has gone from relative rarity in the Great Lakes region to one of the most populous species of bird.

Unfortunately, this explosive population growth has led to many concerns that these birds are negatively impacting Ontario's fishing industry, vegetation base, sensitive island ecosystems and other protected water birds in our Great Lakes and freshwater system. The cormorant, a very sociable bird, almost always nests in large colonies. These nesting habits, while commendable in humans, result in the rapid destruction of existing site vegetation through breaking of branches, stripping of foliage, and loss of important ecosystem and canopy cover.

Moreover, the impact of the toxic guano of the hundreds of double-crested cormorants at a nesting site kills trees and vegetation, leaving roosting sites of double-crested cormorants ecologically barren in only a few short years. I know there's a case near Pelee Island—I think it's called Middle Island—where the ministry and the federal government went in and tried to repopulate and get that island ecosystem back, because these birds literally destroyed it.

This has been the case in many areas across the Great Lakes in Ontario. I hope to hear examples, from some of the other members who speak to the bill this afternoon, of the destruction caused by these birds in their own communities.

Moreover, there are ongoing concerns that the overpopulation and range expansion of the double-crested cormorant is having a significant impact on fisheries in the Great Lakes. Double-crested cormorants consume large amounts of fish in the areas they populate, and place a significant impact on species. A typical cormorant can consume 20% to 25% of its body weight, or roughly one pound of fish, each day. Dietary studies on these predatory birds have shown that cormorants consume a wide range of prey species and are opportunistic, generalist feeders. In other words, I guess they'll eat pretty near anything.

A report by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources indicates that cormorant prey selection primarily depends upon the abundance, availability and catchability of fish near their colonies. This includes fish up to 40 centimetres in length. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has associated declines in smallmouth bass and yellow perch abundance in the eastern basin of Lake Ontario with cormorant population increases.

Some fishermen and hunters that I know tell me that they've seen them in action. They'll see a school of fish and actually circle them, come down close to the surface of the water and beat their wings, drive the fish into the centre and then the other birds will catch them. They're quite organized. Probably a lot of people could use organization like they can put together.

1400

This unchecked predation by cormorants should be of concern to this provincial government, as their population growth has the potential to have a very serious consequence for fishing and fishing-related industries in Ontario, which we all rely on. A simple Google search

will turn up numerous stories on the impact cormorants have had on public lands, private property, businesses and communities across Ontario. Unfortunately, despite all this information and the growing concern with the impacts of the cormorant population, the Ministry of Natural Resources has been slow to take action on this issue.

Bill 205, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Amendment Act, is designed as a simple first step that this government can take to control the growth in the numbers of this predatory bird. As I stated earlier, Bill 205 will add the double-crested cormorant to the list of unprotected birds in Ontario, which I listed earlier. I believe that removing this unnecessary protection of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act is a reasonable step for this government to take. It's one more tool that will be at the disposal of those dealing with the issue of cormorant overpopulation.

I hope that members of both the government and third party will join with the official opposition to support Bill 205. I would like to see this bill moved through to the committee stage where we can all learn more about the impacts that double-crested cormorants are having across this province.

Let me make clear that in no way am I supporting the extinction of cormorants or any sort of mass culling, but I am asking the government to take action. By failing to take action for the last number of years—by all governments—we see a shift in the delicate balance of this ecosystem. This imbalance and the overpopulation of a predatory species must be addressed before the scope of the problem is too large to handle and the damage to our ecosystem is too great to recover from.

Thank you, and I look forward to all of the comments during this afternoon's debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Mantha: How do you begin talking about an issue that has been going on for quite some time across this province, particularly, as the member from Sarnia-Lambton mentioned, as a private member's bill came out of my riding from the previous member?

If you look at the history of cormorants, particularly as it comes to Manitoulin Island, they have been an issue, but the issue has been addressed through previous programs, through culling programs from the MNR. Actually, that's where the responsibility falls as far as controlling and monitoring cormorants, but I'll come back to that a little bit later.

I do want to talk about some of the concerns when it comes to cormorants during my brief amount of time, because I've got a lot of my colleagues who want to talk to this as well.

Anglers, of course, across the island and particularly individuals who are in the aquaculture sector are very much concerned with the increased presence of cormorants on Manitoulin Island, across the North Shore. You ask yourself why. What happened and why do we have such a high population now of cormorants?

A few years ago—I would say about four or five years ago—when we had the very cold winter, there was a lot of the natural feed for cormorants that was destroyed in southern Ontario. They all pushed up to northern Ontario and that became a big issue, and the impacts it was having on the fisheries and on some of the businesses.

Just on cormorants, really quickly, they're a very crafty bird. Their beak is kind of shaped with a hook at the end, so just picture this: They can sit on the side of a net where you have an aquaculture farm, and they shoot their beaks right through the mesh of the net and actually sometimes pierce that net and harm the fry that is within those nets. It affects production and, at the end of the day, it affects their aquaculture business. So there are the big concerns there.

Again, tourism is one of those biggest things across the North Shore when it comes to the fishing industry, and it has a negative effect on it.

However, let's look at the positive that can come out of this. When we're talking about the positive, let's also look at MNR's role, which hasn't been exercised for a very long time when it comes to monitoring cormorants in the environment. Why MNR hasn't been doing their role is because their budgets have been cut. They do not have the individuals out in the field. They do not have the technicians and they do not have the biologists to monitor and make sure and actually account for the populations that are out there.

I've talked to previous individuals who had worked in their roles with the MNR, and they are devastated because they are proud individuals who used to be able to go out and actually work in the field and give concrete evidence. But right now, a lot of the decisions that MNR is making are based on third-party findings that they do in their reports. That is not good enough. I think we're missing out on an opportunity to make sure that the specially trained individuals can go out and actually do the cull in order to regulate the cormorant population. That's very important.

Now, I did talk about a positive spin that we can do on this. If the MNR is not going to do it, why don't we engage with our fish and wild game clubs? The fish and wild game clubs are just sitting on the side waiting to give their volunteer hours. They volunteer thousands of hours every year. Why doesn't the MNR take the time to go out and engage with these individuals and train them?

There is a benefit to having cormorants in areas, believe it or not. On the islands where they nest they have their excrement that falls off of them, and in their areas it creates a whole new aquatic life around these islands. Freshwater shrimp are growing in these areas in great abundance.

When you look at the negative and you look at the positive, monitoring and making sure there is a proper control on this is really key. And who has that role? That's the role of the MNR. That's where this bill should lie. We shouldn't have to deal with these bills. It's not the first time I've heard of a bill such as this come forward from the Conservatives in order to address an issue

because of the lack of initiative by the government. This is just the second, third, fourth one that I've heard over the numerous years I've been here.

Now, there is a little piece of training that will be involved in this if we are going to reach out to these other organizations to prepare for the cull, because cormorants nest on islands. Of course, they do. But there are other nesting birds there. So you have to be careful in regard to what eggs you're going to oil, what areas you're going to go into, so that you do not harm the other birds that are there in that area.

Having said that, there are definitely negatives to having cormorants in your area, but if they're controlled and if you monitor them, there's an opportunity for some positives as well. For individuals who are affected negatively by this, there is a course of action presently in the act that gives them the opportunity to regulate it as well.

With that, I'll let my other colleagues speak, but this is something, once again, that is a government responsibility that they should be doing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Ottawa-Orléans.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I'm very proud to rise today and speak about Bill 205, An Act to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997. As an MPP who actually represents a riding that is situated on the Ottawa River and that has a diverse ecosystem which goes from farmland to wetland, I understand the importance of having a healthy ecosystem. And I have to say, much like the member opposite, I've sought to protect the Great Lakes ecosystem myself, through Bill 75, Microbead Elimination and Monitoring Act.

I do understand the concerns brought forward by the member for Sarnia-Lambton about the double-crested cormorants and how they impact the ecosystem and landowners. Currently, as our law stands, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act allows landowners to kill double-crested cormorants if they are damaging or about to damage their property. In fact, they can take this action without authorization from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

We must be good stewards of the environment and our ecosystem, and that means taking a measured approach to any sort of population management and control. Double-crested cormorants are native to North America. During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, their populations were decimated. After these decades their populations were restored, and research has shown that their population has stabilized or actually declined slightly in recent years.

Madam Speaker, I have significant concerns about the effects of this bill, if passed. The bill strips protection from double-crested cormorants and allows for small game hunters to kill these birds. This would take Ontario out of Canadian alignment and would be the only Canadian jurisdiction to remove protections from these birds.

1410

This bill also would create problems and possibly not even solve what is seen as a problem. If passed, the bill

will allow those with small-game licences to kill these birds. It would also allow them to kill an unlimited amount, and it will not mandate these hunters to properly dispose of their bodies, leaving these dead cormorants to waste.

There is also the question of the effectiveness of hunting cormorants as a method of population control. The destruction of a cormorant's colony can remove that colony, but another could immediately move in to fill that space. Shooting can frighten these birds from the area, but they often return a few weeks later to the colony. Destruction of these colonies can also shift these colonies and birds to somewhere else in their natural habitat, setting up a colony elsewhere.

If it is determined through research and studies that cormorants are putting significant pressure on certain fish species, then the actions that the government should take should be measured. Any approach to the double-crested cormorant should be based on research, studies and scientific data. A poorly planned population control effort, such as the one that seems to stem from this private member's bill, can have medium- to long-term negative effects on the biodiversity in our ecosystem. This type of population control effort can push birds into more sensitive areas of our ecosystem. Eliminating birds in the short term can lead to a rapid population increase in the long term, putting these ecosystems under strain from this population growth. Given that the birds are native to North America and they go across many jurisdictions, any action—if decided by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry—that might be taken should be done, I believe, in collaboration with other jurisdictions for lasting population control of cormorants.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's always nice to see you in the chair.

I'm honoured to join in this important debate on Bill 205, one that is being watched very closely in my riding of Leeds–Grenville.

I want to start by commending the member for Sarnia–Lambton. Bill 205 is another example of why Mr. Bailey is such an effective MPP and one of the most successful in getting private members' bills passed. He brings forward very reasonable legislation that provides a solid basis to address an issue that affects many members of this House and our constituents. As a result, members are eager to pass it on second reading, get it into committee, where we can tweak it, and come back here and have it adopted by the government. We saw that recently with his bills dealing with a tax credit for farmers donating to a food bank and with a One Call system to locate underground infrastructure.

I believe he has repeated this approach with Bill 205 to address the exploding double-crested cormorant population. We've heard how these birds are devastating the environment. They're devastating sport fishing and the bait fish industry throughout the Great Lakes and beyond. To address this issue, Mr. Bailey, the member

for Sarnia–Lambton, has brought forward legislation to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997, and put some tools in our tool kit.

Certainly, we've been dealing with the problems caused by cormorants on the St. Lawrence River for years. I personally want to thank the Thousand Islands Association and their membership for helping me advocate for this action. The association, for those that don't know, has members on both sides of the river, and they're extremely frustrated with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Their frustration, Speaker, is heightened because they see the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation taking action on the US side of the border. Recently, we started to hear, especially in my riding, about the cormorant devastation that many constituents are now seeing on the inland lakes and rivers in the riding.

These are small lakes. They're very fragile ecosystems, and a sudden influx of hundreds or thousands of cormorants will quickly strip vegetation and they will wipe out fish populations in those small inland lakes. There is an urgent need for the ministry to get engaged. So, Speaker, you can imagine my disappointment when I filed order paper questions to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry—and the two questions I asked were very straightforward: What is the ministry doing, and would they consider the measures we're debating today? Do you know what their answers were? "Nothing" and "no." Those were the answers to the two questions. The minister said the ministry did a comprehensive review in—get this—2006 and would rely on that knowledge to continue doing nothing. That's right. People in my riding and in ridings all across the province are reporting that this is a big problem, but the government is content to use 10-year-old data as an excuse to bury their heads in the sand. Given the threat to the environment and our tourism economy posed by the uncontrolled explosion in cormorant numbers, that response is unacceptable.

I want to commend the member for Sarnia–Lambton for this very proactive piece of legislation that we're debating today. It's a great basis for a broader discussion that I hope will get to committee.

I urge all members to join me in supporting Bill 205 this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Like about 27% of the people in my riding, in Nickel Belt, I live on a lake. I know that I'm really privileged, and I appreciate that—and so does Gilles and so does John. The privilege of living in northern Ontario is that we get to do that.

Of course, I knew of cormorants because I had gone to his riding, to Manitoulin Island, and I had seen all those black birds that I had never seen before. People explained to me that they were cormorants. So you can imagine my surprise when, about three years ago, we were sitting on our deck, looking out, and I said, "Wow, what a weird-looking loon"—because they're dark like a loon and have

a long beak. My husband said, "No, that's not a loon. That's a cormorant." Sure enough, we got into the boat and we started to go around. We only had two or three. By the end of the summer, we had two or three dozen. Fast-forward to the next spring: We had 200 or 300. Those little birds multiply very fast, don't they? Then the second thing we noticed really quickly is that if you wanted to know where the fish were, all you had to do was to go where the cormorants were because they feed on the same fish we feed on.

After about three years of this, the fishing for walleye and pickerel and bass and perch in our lake was not so good anymore. The cormorants were getting fatter, bigger and more numerous all the time. People started talking and bringing ideas like the member is bringing forward.

I also have the privilege, in Nickel Belt, to have the highest percentage of retired MNR people in the entire province. I think they all retired in Nickel Belt. We have a lot of active conservation officers, but more are retired, because the workforce of conservation officers, let me tell you, has gone down since the resources to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry have also gone down.

We started to learn more about what those birds were all about and what their role is within the ecosystem and what should and should not be done to look after those birds.

Fast-forward to this spring: I had a really busy weekend with events last weekend, but I managed to go fishing for about an hour and a half. We went to my favourite spot, close to the narrows—I'm not going to divulge all of my good fishing spots, Madam Speaker—and it was non-stop. When my husband didn't have a fish on, I had a fish on. It came to the place with just one line at a time in the water because we could not net them fast enough. I threw them back because I hit my limit in 10 minutes and that was it. The rest of them we threw back because we respect the limits. All this to say that although we do have a whole lot more cormorants than we have ever had, I would say the population seems to have stabilized right now and the fishing has—although, in the transition, it was tough. It's pretty boring to go fishing when you don't catch anything, let me tell you. I can only take 20 minutes of that; then I say, "Sayonara. I've had enough fun." But it has bounced back. It has bounced back because nature is like this.

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That's not to say that the government does not have a role to play. The government does have a role to play through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. There should be enough resources there to make sure that they do a good job of looking at where it is a threat to our ecosystem and where it is not a threat to our ecosystem. But when you have one conservation officer for an area the size of Toronto—this is part of my riding; I'm many times the size of Toronto, and my riding is one of those big northern ridings. You have one conservation officer for all of this? I look at their map, Speaker, and some of

the lakes they will patrol—it is on the map and it's scheduled once every 25 years. That's because this is working flat-out trying to do their job. This is not acceptable, and this falls squarely on this government, who, year after year, has cut back.

There's a role to play. But we have the tools in Ontario. It is called the Ministry of Natural Resources. Give them the resources to do their job. Make sure that there are enough conservation officers out there that can do that and certainly meet—we also have lake associations throughout my riding—with the people who belong to those lake associations that have questions. Ours—part of the Vermilion River Stewardship committee—had serious questions when all of a sudden there were no more fish to be caught. I even caught a crayfish—not easy to do on a line, Madam Speaker, but I managed. That was all that seemed to be left.

We have recovered, partly because we have those conservation officers that came and helped us. But they did that on a voluntary basis. There should be a conservation officer available to all of the stewardship committees of all of the lakes and rivers in northern Ontario so that when they do see an issue like this, you have access to people that have the knowledge and the skills to guide you through so you continue to have a healthy ecosystem, because this is what we all depend on. Believe it or not, Madam Speaker, we are part of that food chain, and if there is no food for those birds and those fish, there will be no food for us either.

I urge the government to really listen clearly to what people are saying. The Ministry of Natural Resources is our key to a healthy environment in the north, and right now they are failing at their job.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's a pleasure to speak on Bill 205 from my good friend from Sarnia-Lambton. I must say that his seatmate, about two or three months ago, approached me to co-sponsor this bill. But I guess he got busy or he had some other issues; he's not here. So I'm glad that you brought it back.

I'm going to tell you a personal story. I have some experience with cormorants. If this bill was before me, I would say, 15 years ago, in the early 2000s, I would have not hesitated one little bit to jump in the fray and say, "Let's do it." Let me tell you the story, Speaker.

I live in Brighton, Ontario, home of Presqu'ile Provincial Park. The park had become a colony for cormorants. There are two small islands off Presqu'ile park on the west shore, right by one of the most beautiful beaches in Ontario, almost as good as the one in Prince Edward county, Sandbanks—almost.

The two islands were destroyed. Vegetation was destroyed. Because they're not very far from this beautiful beach, it was damaging the beach as well. As a matter of fact, crews had to clean that beach every day during the summer in order to keep it safe for kids and swimmers.

To add to that, there was—there isn't as much anymore, but the Quick family in Brighton had a phenom-

al commercial fishing business. Speaker, as you heard from other members that spoke about this, cormorants are very good when it comes to fishing. Actually, they could see the difference in their livelihood.

I was the mayor of Brighton at that time, and for two or three years it had become quite a thing in our community. I'm referring to Brighton, because that was where the biggest colony we knew of was at the time, but we knew there were others.

There was very little action from MNR back then, and some people were taking responsibility on their own. It wasn't a very good way to do things, and I won't get into those details. That was yesterday.

Finally, in 2003 or 2004, I would say, I happened to be in this place, and the ministry did start taking some action. Along with park staff, the folks from MNR in Peterborough started looking at the situation, because it was frankly becoming a bit of a health issue, plus it did destroy the vegetation of two islands.

When the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills asked me two or three months ago, I did go back, because frankly, it went silent. But before I move ahead, I've got to tell you this story, Speaker.

There was a real faction when MNR started talking about controlling the bird population. Some of it was with guns. Of course, it brought a number of people who are fairly strongly opposed to that kind of activity. As a member of this place, I was lobbied pretty heavily to make sure that MNR would not take that action in what they call culling the birds. I was having my annual summer barbecue, with 300 or 400 people, and some of these activists, to prevent culling of the birds, dressed in chefs' uniforms and picketed outside my barbecue. Actually, some of the visitors who came to my barbecue said, "Wow, look at Rinaldi. He's got valet parking at the end of his driveway." But that wasn't the reason. Anyway, at the end of the day I spoke to the folks; they came in. I had real beef hamburgers, and they joined us for a barbecue and the day turned out well.

Let me fast-forward. I've only got—oh, my God—less than three minutes. MNR got involved. There were different ways. One was by scaring the birds. The other was by oiling the eggs to stop them from—because they do reproduce quite rapidly. And there was some controlled culling. It took two or three years, if I remember correctly, to get the population under control.

When the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills talked to me two or three months ago, I went back to the park management, because frankly, I hadn't heard anything more in the last eight or 10 years. They said, basically, "Yes, there are still some cormorants in the area, but we're controlling them. We're keeping an eye on them, and whenever we feel that things are changing, we have some control mechanisms, based on the time of the year and based on when this is happening, and we've been very successful in keeping the population under control."

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Naturally.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Naturally, Speaker.

Now, I did a little bit of research. I think my predecessor spoke about some of the things that MNR is helping with where these colonies might appear, because they are there and they do damage. The ministry is prepared to assist, in a natural way, to control the population and minimize the damage they might do. And although the commercial fishing is not as strong as it used to be, it's not because of cormorants. It's just the way things are today.

I haven't heard—and I'll be very honest about something that was very top of mind 10 or 12 years ago—about a decline even in the recreational fishing population. There are lots of fishing tournaments. There was one about a month ago, a big walleye tournament in Trenton, which covers a large area. And although I'm not a fisherman, when something goes awry, you certainly hear about those issues, and you become involved.

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My sense is that things are under control. MNR provides the resources to keep control. So I'm not sure that we want to put more regulations in place and more structures in place. Frankly, I'm not a big fan of culling birds, even though they did it back then because it was extreme. I'm not sure I'd like to see this kind of mechanism taking place.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to rise in support of Bill 205, and I hope that Mr. Bailey will be successful in having his third private member's bill passed. I think it's sensible and balanced. I think it's based on good science and strong evidence.

I am a little worried—the comments from my colleague just now. They seem to be looking for excuses not to support the bill. They're making their own observations, I guess, on an alleged decline in cormorant population. I know there are some more radical environmental and animal rights' groups that have a significant foothold in the Ontario Liberal Party and New Democrats, but I think their view would be not to touch any animal population whatsoever. Some would be of the view that it's humans who are causing all the problems and we need to control humans, but they would object to this.

I try to look at this from a very objective perspective, and good advice from folks in Niagara. I don't know what he's talking about in his neck of the woods—I know my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings will address it—but we're actually seeing an increase in population and increased damage. A quick scan of media, Madam Speaker, as I was listening to the member's speech, shows that throughout the northeastern United States, across the Great Lakes, from Milwaukee to Vermont and New York state, the cormorant populations are causing significant damage.

I spoke with Felix Barbetti about these issues over time. Felix was a respected senior civil servant in the Ministry of Natural Resources. Felix said that he remembers once driving from Thunder Bay to Lake

Nipissing to see two cormorants, years and years ago. That was the drive he had to do to actually see them in the wild. Now he sees them in his backyard—well, not exactly, but in the Niagara Peninsula, along the waterfront, like where I am, and Lake Erie. The damage to bait fish is significant. The impact on the commercial fishing industry is real and large and damaging. In fact, Felix Barbetti told me that a Brock professor and researchers were once setting up nesting sites for terns in Port Colborne, and cormorants took over those artificial nests and displaced the terns. They'd push more fragile species out of nesting areas, including great egrets and blue herons, which I love to see along the Welland River, where I live.

Felix also told me about an experiment at Oneida Lake, New York, which is a laboratory for Cornell University. They saw a significant decline in fish populations. When they researched it, they found that the main cause was actually cormorants overfishing.

Erno Rossi, a very respected naturalist in the province of Ontario, very active in the Niagara Peninsula, remarked that many shorelines in Niagara, as well as islands including off Hamilton Harbour, are bare because the bird droppings are so toxic that they kill trees and other vegetation.

Ken Lounsbury, who's very active in the OFAH and is a resident of Beamsville, says that the best method in moving forward is to start oiling the eggs. I know that colleagues across the floor who are looking for an excuse to vote against the bill are making it seem like we're all going to go out with shotguns and start shooting them one by one, like some kind of video game. No; I think what the member from Sarnia-Lambton, Mr. Bailey, is calling for are sensible, ecologically sound measures, as in oiling eggs, to reduce populations overall. I think the evidence is strong, from an environmental point of view, from achieving an ecological balance, from the economic impacts, that Mr. Bailey's bill is a sensible, thoughtful and balanced approach to controlling cormorant populations, just as they are doing in states across the lakes to make sure we maintain habitat for other species and support commercial fishing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Todd Smith: It is an honour to rise and speak to this bill put forward by my friend from Sarnia-Lambton on proper species management for cormorants. That's what we're talking about here.

Back when I was in radio, we used to talk about the measures that the member from Northumberland-Quinte West was mentioning during his remarks earlier, especially in the area of Presqu'ile park, where cormorants were devastating that park, as the member alluded to. However, it's quite discouraging to hear that it appears as though he's going to be voting against this very thoughtful piece of legislation put forward by my colleague. We'd outlined the different methods that would be used to control the cormorant population in Presqu'ile at that time.

It has been great, actually, for me to serve as the Ministry of Natural Resources critic for the PC caucus for the last couple of months to deal with issues like species management, conservation, resource management, recreational tourism and other things. Having met with a number of stakeholders in various parts of the sector over the last couple of weeks, I get a deep understanding of how interconnected the ecosystems are from mineral, plant and animal perspectives, and how active many recreational tourists and industries are in ensuring the long-term sustainability of these resources.

Contrary to the perceived opinion, hunters in Ontario actually do understand that no one benefits from over-hunting any animal. If you kill too many bears, you end bear hunting. If you chop down too many trees, pretty soon you don't have a forestry industry. People in the resources sector understand that they have a vested interest in the long-term sustainability of those resources, which brings us to today's bill on cormorants.

Here we have a predator—and that's what it is; even favourable pieces written about the species admit that it's a predator, Madam Speaker. What we have is a particularly harmful predator to long-term ecosystem sustainability and biodiversity, both because it engages in predatory activity by consuming other species and because it destroys the habitat of other species by destroying vegetation. One cormorant can take one pound of fish out of our lakes and rivers. So we have a predator that is having a detrimental effect on species management and biodiversity. We know that to be the case.

I know for a fact that conservation authorities in my area are of the opinion that the cormorant is having a detrimental effect on conservation efforts. We therefore do have a responsibility to do something.

Too often, this debate revolves around culling. That's the option that gets the most attention because it's the most violent, but it's also the option of absolute last resort, and as a result, it is seldom used. There is also a reasonable argument for why culling should be the last resort: The European Union found that where forcible culling occurs, what can end up happening is that the short-term reduction in the cormorant population results in less competition for resources and larger nests.

There are, however, methods of cormorant control that have long-term positive impacts on species management. These include egg oiling and nest disturbance, among many other viable methods for reducing the cormorant population to sustainable levels. Those are the kinds of measures that we saw, for the most part, in Presqu'ile Provincial Park in the Bay of Quinte region.

We know that we have natural cormorant habitats or breeding grounds where cormorants tend to thrive. Historically in southern Ontario, that has been the major bird migratory route, along the north shore of Lake Ontario between Presqu'ile Provincial Park and the Thousand Islands, but there are other problem spots across the province, as well.

What we're doing by not being active as the Ministry of Natural Resources in dealing with this is letting down

our neighbours who are doing things about this. They're doing the best they can to manage this predator that is in our lakes and rivers and destroying our property.

Guano destroys property. It destroys islands. It destroys other habitats. That's why I think it's very important that the opposition members in the third party and the government support Mr. Bailey's bill here this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I now return to the member to do the wrap-up.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I want to thank the members from Ottawa–Orléans, Algoma–Manitoulin, Prince Edward–Hastings, Leeds–Grenville, Niagara West–Glanbrook, Nickel Belt and Northumberland–Quinte West for their comments—their support or their criticism, such as the case may be.

I think the case has been made. I think everyone knows there is an issue. Maybe in some cases it's not as bad as it was at one time in the north, I hear. But this is a bird of prey that seems like it's building support. It just comes in and it cleans out a whole ecosystem where it is, and then it moves on. Maybe that's why they moved on from these other places: They cleaned it out and they had to move on. I think that's the case.

As my colleagues have said, it's not about wholesale going out and shooting birds; it's about taking those systems that work already: the oiling of the eggs, the disturbance of the nests—I don't think these birds have any natural predator, because they nest high up in the trees, so there's probably nothing that can disturb their nests other than man.

I would encourage the government party and the third party, as well, to seriously consider this. If not this, then what? We need to do something.

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I think this bill, in a small way, gives the Ministry of Natural Resources the ability, once we would pass that, to bring it to committee and bring in as many experts as we want from both sides: the people who say, "No, we don't need to do any more," and the ones who have been affected by this, whether it's in sport fishing, commercial fishing or the parks system. Bring them all in and let them speak and tell us how best to proceed. If there's a better way of doing it, or if they can prove at committee that it isn't an issue, then we could accept that, as well.

I would encourage everyone to support this bill so we can get it to committee, where we can really do a good study.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will vote on this particular bill at the end of private members' public business.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 74

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Standing Committee on Social Policy should conduct public hearings on Bill 74, the Housing Services Corporation Accountability Act, and refer the bill back to the House as soon as possible given that the

Legislature unanimously gave this bill second reading over a year ago, and that the House should conduct third reading without delay.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Hardeman has moved private member's notice of motion number 77. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Over a year ago, this Legislature unanimously gave my bill, the Housing Services Corporation Accountability Act, second reading, but since then the bill has been stalled waiting for committee.

As you know, the Housing Services Corp. was created to obtain group discounts on natural gas and insurance for social housing providers. The idea was good: that purchasing together would provide a discount for everyone. But over the last decade, the organization has lost sight of its purpose, and as a result taxpayers and people in need are paying the price. My bill will ensure accountability by allowing the Auditor General to investigate the HSC, like the government gave her the authority to investigate the TSSA, which has the same corporate structure.

The Housing Services Corporation Accountability Act would add transparency by requiring salaries over \$100,000 to be reported on the sunshine list. It would save housing providers millions by letting them purchase natural gas and insurance from the best-priced source rather than forcing them to purchase it through the HSC monopoly.

Last April, after the bill received second reading, it was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Since then, the committee has met 35 times, but the government hasn't moved the bill forward. Over that time, the wait-list for social housing has increased by almost 3,000 families.

Just last week, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association released their annual survey, which showed that there are now 171,360 families waiting for social housing in Ontario.

Every year, Ontario's housing wait-list hits a new record high. In fact, over the last 10 years the wait-list has increased by 40%, or almost 50,000 families.

The families waiting for housing don't care about partisan politics or negotiations between House leaders, but they do care about the millions of dollars that were supposed to help them and instead have been wasted or misused. They care that today, with this motion, we have the opportunity to take a step and end that abuse.

Madam Speaker, the HSC pays its expenses by marking up the cost of services to housing providers—that means that every dollar they spent is a public dollar which was intended to provide housing for people in need.

A memo from the city of Toronto shows that purchasing through the HSC cost Toronto Community Housing \$6.3 million in a single year. That's enough to provide rent supplements to house almost 1,000 families or to repair 126 units a year that have been boarded up because they are uninhabitable. In Hamilton, where there are

5,685 families on the wait-list, purchasing through HSC cost CityHousing Hamilton \$1.1 million extra in a single year. In Peel region, it added \$182,000 to the cost of gas.

The minister would have us believe that a few larger housing providers are paying more to help the smaller providers, but the facts show that just isn't the case. A detailed city of Stratford study last year showed they are paying \$40,000 more for natural gas because they are forced to purchase through the HSC and \$4,000 to be allowed to purchase insurance from a cheaper source. A Niagara region study found that for natural gas, "The HSC program has been more expensive than either Union Gas or Enbridge." A report from the Thunder Bay district social services board estimated that purchasing natural gas through the HSC added \$750,000 to the cost.

The county of Oxford, which has 1,219 families on the wait-list, estimates that they could save \$100,000 a year if they didn't have to buy insurance or natural gas through the HSC. In fact, Oxford and about 100 housing providers pay HSC every year just for the right to purchase their insurance from a cheaper source. That means their insurance isn't required to obtain volume discounts, as the minister would have us believe. It is simply about HSC taking money from housing providers.

That money is funding for-profit subsidiaries and a lifestyle that the 171,000 families waiting for housing could never afford: \$8 for water, bottles of wine, a luxury seven-day vacation in South Africa and over \$5,000 in business class air fare for one board member, all paid for with money intended for housing. The HSC is supposed to provide services for Ontario housing providers, but in the last few years—and, I would point out, for Ontario housing providers—the CEO's travel has included:

- more than \$4,600 to attend a conference in Australia;

- multiple trips to California, including flying to Santa Barbara for a single meeting, and over \$2,000 for a conference in Los Angeles;

- more than 10 trips to England, including one instance where he flew back to Ontario for two days to attend a birthday party;

- multiple trips to Vancouver, including one bill for over \$1,000 at the Fairmont Pacific Rim.

The trips to Europe, Australia, South Africa and California have all been paid for by overcharging housing providers for the services that they need, services that the government is forcing them to buy from the HSC.

After we exposed where this money went, the government's solution was to put the world-travelling CEO in charge of approving expenses for everyone else at the HSC. Expenses for just the top four show that in 2015—that's after the government says the problems had been cleaned up—housing money went to send multiple people to London, England; Manchester, England; Chicago, Illinois; Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; and Winnipeg, Manitoba. Thousands and thousands of dollars that were intended for housing instead are paying for travel.

But not all expenses appear to be reported. One person reported \$1,700 to attend a conference in Chicago, but failed to include the registration fee she charged on her HSC credit card, which made the total cost \$3,000. Through freedom of information, we found over \$3,000 spent by employees who don't publicly report their expenses to attend a conference in Nova Scotia. We also found multiple other trips to Nova Scotia and a trip to Calgary by these same employees. Unless the auditor investigates, we may never know how many trips are still being paid for with this housing money. Clearly, the problem is not solved. While 171,000 families are waiting for affordable housing, executives at the HSC are still expensing \$4 coffees and over \$200 to rent an SUV for a day to travel to meetings.

My bill would stop HSC executives from overcharging housing providers for a luxury lifestyle by allowing providers to purchase from another source if it is cheaper. It would ensure that the HSC can run efficiently and save municipalities money. That is why 65 municipalities across Ontario passed resolutions supporting this bill. Municipalities recognize that this bill will also increase accountability.

Housing money hasn't just gone to world travel; it also went to create for-profit subsidiaries, similar to those at Ornge air ambulance. This is where we need the Provincial Auditor's expertise to get the answers. We don't know why HSC invested Ontario housing money in HS 497, a corporation which never operated and whose only address was a lawyer's office in Manchester, England. But we know that at least half of that housing money is now gone.

We know that the HSC created a complicated corporate structure and, through a trust, owned the majority of a solar panel company called InnoServ. But we don't know why, year after year, they would loan InnoServ hundreds of thousands of dollars and then write those loans off as uncollectible in the same year that they were given. We don't know how many millions of dollars of housing money went to a solar panel company without anyone noticing.

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There is a subsidiary called GLOBE, which was created to provide energy programs and is now being dissolved. We don't know the total loss of this subsidiary, but as of December 31, GLOBE owed HSC more than \$750,000, and it was already acknowledged that they were not going to be fully repaid.

The government will tell us that these problems have been cleaned up, but HSC actually has two new subsidiaries. We know that, with a British partner, HSC created CIH Canada and loaned it \$125,000. We also know that HSC's executives have flown all over promoting it. Now it seems that they have put more money into the subsidiary.

Weiler and Company's recent report says, "All requests, in the 2015 fiscal year, for additional funding, or waiver of shareholder management fees have been approved by the HSC board of directors." They don't

report how much was approved, so until the auditor investigates, we won't know how much more housing money has been diverted. But we know that even though HSC keeps putting money in, their British partner has the option to take over more than 50% of the organization for only a nominal fee.

We also know that over the last two years, HSC has been working with partners to create a new subsidiary that appears to duplicate the lending programs of Infrastructure Ontario. According to their briefing notes, the feasibility study alone will cost \$250,000. Madam Speaker, public money that was intended to provide housing for people in need should not be going to pay for world travel, fancy meals or empire building.

It has also been more than a year since one of the two provincial appointments to the HSC board resigned after it was revealed that he was receiving more than \$70,000 in payments to his personal consulting firm as well as his pay on the board. It's more than a year, and the minister still hasn't bothered to replace him on the board to ensure provincial oversight.

During that time, the minister introduced a bill on affordable housing that actually amends the Housing Services Act, the legislation that enables HSC and requires housing providers to purchase natural gas and insurance through them. But the minister failed to introduce changes to fix these problems and help housing providers save millions of dollars by allowing them to purchase gas and insurance at the best price.

Ontario taxpayers and the 171,000 families waiting for housing need the members in this Legislature to see beyond partisan politics and House leader negotiations. They need us to pass this motion today and work together as quickly as possible to get the Housing Services Corporation Accountability Act through to third reading so we can ensure that every public dollar intended to provide housing actually goes to people in need.

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Hardeman has introduced a resolution calling for his bill to come forward to the social policy committee and have third reading. As you're well aware, Madam Speaker, the provincial government once promised to upload social housing costs from the municipalities. Instead, it forced municipal housing providers to buy costly services from an unaccountable monopoly whose CEO expensed more than \$100,000 in personal travel and dining over 20 months. With no provincial dollars and only property taxes for funding, Ontario's social housing providers have a tough job to do. This job is made tougher when housing dollars are misspent by the same agency that the provincial government created to help service providers spend housing dollars wisely.

One year ago, government members voted to make the Housing Services Corp. open and accountable to the public. But then the government completely ignored its commitment when it wrote Bill 204, the Promoting

Affordable Housing Act. The Housing Services Corp. could play a vital public role, and it should be open and accountable to the public.

Speaker, some background on all of this: In April 2015, the Legislature passed, at second reading, Ernie Hardeman's Bill 74, which would put the Housing Services Corp. and its subsidiaries under the oversight of the Auditor General and the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act. Housing service providers would also no longer be forced to participate in HSC programs. But the bill has gathered dust for nearly a year. And the government's new Bill 204, which amends the HSC's foundational legislation, does nothing at all to make the Housing Services Corp. more accountable or more transparent.

The government completely ignored the commitment it made last year. The government promised a review of the Housing Services Corp. in 2015. But in March 2016, Mr. Hardeman complained that the audit did not dig deep enough and noted the firm had ties to the Liberal Party. He did not describe the review in complimentary terms.

The Housing Services Corp. is a non-profit, private corporation originally created as the Social Housing Services Corp. by the Conservative government of the day, at the same time that they effectively killed the Ontario Housing Corp. and downloaded social housing onto municipal service managers.

Since 2011, the Housing Services Corp. has been constituted under the Housing Services Act, which replaced the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000, under which the corporation had been known as the Social Housing Services Corp.

The Housing Services Corp. is not a crown agency. Speaker, I just want to stop for a moment on that. This is an issue that seems to come up time and time again. We dealt with it with regard to Bill 151. We've dealt with it in other situations, where the government spins off these corporations, which are not accessible to the Ombudsman, the Auditor General or other officers of the Legislature, so our ability to actually bring in the reins on a corporation that's spending public money is dramatically reduced. I think it's entirely reasonable, the fact that we should be looking at the operation of this organization.

The job of the HSC is to provide managerial and business services to housing providers, including a bulk insurance purchasing program. In 2011, municipalities were told they could no longer buy insurance outside the Housing Services Corp. Several municipalities, including the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, opposed this decision, asking, "If the HSC is so confident that their pricing is better, why are they unwilling to let us test the market?" The HSC said mandatory participation was needed in order to ensure the broadest pool and thus the best prices overall.

After a review, which was prompted as a result of these complaints, the HSC changed the policy yet again to allow municipalities to seek better deals under an alternate broker program. But under that program, if the municipalities used an alternate broker, they had to pay a service fee of 2.5% of the insurance premium, plus HST,

effectively penalizing municipalities for seeking the best deal, which is supposed to be the job of the HSC in the first place.

Despite the HSC's mandate to deliver the most cost-effective insurance to municipal housing service providers, several municipalities are still finding better deals outside the HSC. For 2013-14, Waterloo chose to pay the \$9,300 opt-out fee to HSC because they found insurance that was not only slightly cheaper—even with the fee—it also covered up to \$400 million in damages, as compared to the HSC policy, which covered only \$150 million. The Bruce County Housing Corp. board also chose an alternate broker in 2013-14.

There are many other examples. The NDP found that the HSC collected \$95,000 in alternate broker fees in 2013, representing nearly \$4 million worth of insurance policies purchased through alternate brokers. This is roughly one third of the value of insurance policies sold through the HSC in 2013, according to documents the NDP has obtained.

The HSC also has a bulk natural gas purchasing program. In July 2015, Mr. Hardeman revealed a confidential city of Toronto report claiming that Mayor John Tory had quietly asked Premier Wynne to change Toronto's agreement with the HSC that, according to city staff, forces the municipality to pay an extra \$6.3 million a year for natural gas purchased through the HSC.

Speaker, I don't think there's any question that there are substantial issues here that need to be probed, that the Auditor General needs to go through and look at the question of value for money. It may be that everything we've heard is misleading; that, in fact, everything is fine with this corporation. But there's enough smoke here to send in the Auditor General as a firefighter to find out what is going on.

1500

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Before I turn to the member from Burlington, I remind the member from Toronto-Danforth that you address each other as "the member from," then the riding.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It is a pleasure to stand in the House today and speak to private member's motion 77, put forward by our colleague the member from Oxford. I can understand the motivation of the member opposite in putting forth this motion. As members of provincial Parliament, we all hope to have our private members' bills pass third reading and receive royal assent.

However, in order for this to take place, there is an established protocol that is followed, which is collaborated upon through regular conversation with all House leaders. This motion, in essence, looks to circumvent this legislative due process that surrounds all pieces of legislation that have passed second reading. Therein lies the challenge.

That is not to say the member from Oxford's bill in question, Bill 74, the Housing Services Corporation Accountability Act, is not without merit or should not be called to committee. I know the member to be an

honourable and hard-working MPP who is a strong advocate for these kinds of issues and we appreciate that work.

Rather, it is that this bill should go through the same process as every other piece of legislation here in the House. Bill 74 proposes allowing municipalities to opt out of the mandated provision of services by the Housing Services Corp., or HSC, to municipal social housing providers and service managers.

Madam Speaker, the Housing Services Corp. is mandated to provide certain vital and valued services centrally, with a goal to reduce costs and improve efficiencies to the housing providers accessing them.

Our government recently, in 2011, reformed the legislation that governs the HSC under the Housing Services Act. These reforms included the fact that, as the member from Oxford noted, providers have been allowed to obtain equivalent insurance coverage from an alternate broker. We strengthened the accountability standards inherent in the act that require HSC to report annually to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and also to provide its audited financial statements.

The minister has previously welcomed feedback from municipalities and service managers on this matter, and our government is committed to continuing to work with partners to strengthen how social and affordable housing providers acquire these services and programs.

Having said that, it would still be improper to circumvent the time-honoured process which takes place between the three House leaders. It is this process and this process alone which should decide the bills that are called to a given committee. It is a mechanism which is part of the democratic process; as such, it allows all sides of the House to be heard through their House leader, and it functions well.

I can truly appreciate the member's desire and passion to see his bill, which I am sure he has put considerable effort into, reach the next stage of its legislative process. But rather than support this motion today, I would encourage him to follow the procedure and process already in place to have this done.

As such, I will not be supporting this motion here today. However, I would ask my colleagues here to think about their support as well and to respect the processes and procedures of this House. In closing, I would just add that I am sharing my time with the member from Etobicoke Centre. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm proud to rise to speak in support of the motion brought forward by my colleague the member for Oxford. I bring two perspectives to the debate this afternoon, not only as the MPP for Whitby-Oshawa, but as the past chairperson for the health and social services committee at the region of Durham, where housing was one of the main issues that we discussed within that committee.

What is clear in the discussion of the motion before us is that Ontario is facing a housing affordability crisis, but

over the last year the government has done nothing to move forward the Housing Services Corporation Accountability Act that would have helped. It would have helped, Speaker, to stop the waste and abuse of affordable housing dollars.

The government is quick to do photo ops on housing, but when it comes to a bill—a bill that could save millions of dollars intended for affordable housing—they drag their feet. In the course of that, they're ignoring families that are on the waiting list.

As my colleague from Oxford pointed out in his comments, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association released its annual waiting list. This is not the first time they've done this, Speaker; they do it every year. Again, it showed that there are now approximately 172,000 families waiting for affordable housing, and the wait-list has increased by 40%—40%. The government has had 13 years to fix the wait-list, yet now we have the highest wait-list for affordable housing there's ever been.

If you cut through it all, life is simply harder under the Liberals. That is resulting in more and more vulnerable families being unable to put a proper roof over their heads. What these families need is a government that understands the importance of keeping life affordable and making sure that taxpayers' dollars are actually used to provide the support that people need.

This government's policies, from spiralling hydro rates to higher taxes, are simply making life more expensive—making life more expensive for seniors, making life expensive for all aspects of the community. The only real measure that we have seen from this government is that every year, the wait-list for affordable housing hits a new record high and is increased every year.

While I'm on my feet, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the member for Oxford's tireless work on this file. It's a difficult file and a complex file. Yes, it does include municipalities, and it did include the region of Durham in the course of developing its affordable housing strategy. We had so much optimism when the government introduced the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy and spoke about the timing of bringing forward the Housing Services Corporation Accountability Act in parallel and on a similar track. But it simply hasn't happened. The member for Oxford has repeatedly pushed the Liberal government to end the misuse and waste of housing money by the Housing Services Corp.

What's clear is that the constituents in Whitby–Oshawa have sent a strong message in the recent by-election to the government that they're tired of their failed policies, which lead to longer wait times, watered-down services, waste and mismanagement.

One of the main issues that I deal with in my constituency office is affordable housing and the wait-list. It crosses all sectors of my community, and I'm sure it does in yours too, Speaker.

As I said at the outset of my remarks, I'm proud to stand in support of the member for Oxford's motion. I encourage all members in the House to support his

important work. The crux of what he's asking for is a broader engagement of all sectors that are affected by the lack of affordable housing. Again, broader consultation is required, and I would encourage all members in the House to support his important work and bring this legislation back to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, of which I'm a member.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It is a pleasure to rise today on motion number 77 from the member from Oxford. I listened very closely to not only the presentation by the member from Oxford, but to what the government was saying about this motion and the position they're taking. I'll elaborate a little on what I think about their position a little bit further after some background.

I do believe that the member from Oxford is warranted in bringing about this bill, and also that it is clearly borne out of frustration with a government that I think knows the member is on to something, and is fearful that where there is smoke, which they are aware of, there certainly will be fire, as we've seen in so many other instances. The member from Oxford presented a massive amount of anecdotal evidence to definitely warrant action and to warrant our involvement and oversight on this. It is our hope that the government would do the same.

1510

As background, in April 2015 the Legislature passed at second reading the member from Oxford's Bill 74, which would put the Housing Services Corp. and its subsidiaries under the oversight of the Auditor General and the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act. Housing service providers would also no longer be forced to participate in HSC programs. If you have been following this debate, the member from Oxford has given us many points of information as to why a municipality wouldn't want to participate in some of the programs. They're not getting the best value for dollar. They're not getting the accountability, the transparency and the partnership, it seems, that the agency was initially constructed to deliver.

So here we are. We're forced to follow the money. The government's position, as I've heard and as I understand it today, is that the member from Oxford should simply follow procedure in this House or the convention that bills be talked about and worked on through House leaders. For those who may not know, that is certainly the convention. It's tradition, and it's something that we rely on our House leaders to talk about and to figure out how this place can flow and the agenda of the House can get through and that opposition parties can have their bills looked at and scrutinized. That's the democratic process. However, ultimately, it is the government House leader that dictates any of the scheduling of the bills through this House. It's not done through a majority vote in House leaders. Whether the NDP and the Progressive Conservatives have a majority does not matter. If the government House leader decides that they don't want a bill to see the light of day, that is what's going to happen. Of course, this is why we're debating this bill today.

I believe and I support the member's ability and his right to use his private member's slot—and we all know in this House that that's a precious spot. He's using it once again to shine light on this subject, and I commend him for that, because there are so many subjects that I know we all want to touch on. To have to do it twice shows how deeply important this issue is and how he truly believes, through the research that he's done, that there's something for us to look at here.

I support the member's position. I will support the bill. It's an indication that, when the process fails in this place, we have to take all the measures that we can to ensure that our people are served and our constituents are served.

Again, I thank the member from Oxford for doing that. I think it's the right path, and I hope that government members see this argument and understand that this is the right thing to do. We don't need another Ornge Air Ambulance. We don't need another eHealth. Perhaps that's what the government is afraid of, but do the right thing and ensure that we're all working together to ensure accountability and transparency.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'm happy to rise in the Legislature this afternoon to speak to the motion put forward by the member from Oxford. Motion number 77 calls on the House to express the opinion that Bill 74, the Housing Services Corporation Accountability Act, should be referred back to the House as soon as possible and that the House should conduct third reading without delay.

Madam Speaker, I haven't been here as long as some other members, but I do understand that this motion seeks to supersede the legislative due process that surrounds all bills which have passed second reading. As with all other bills that have been referred to committee, this process is collaborated upon through regular conversation between all the House leaders. For these reasons, this matter, like all other similar private members' bills at second reading, would best be dealt with through the established process.

Furthermore, I'd like to add and insist that the fact that Bill 74 passed the Legislature unanimously at second reading has little bearing on the discussion at hand. Unanimous support to move a bill to committee should not be mistaken for unanimous support for the bill itself and does not mean that there is unanimous support to supersede legislative due process.

On April 16, 2015, I had the pleasure of rising to speak to Bill 74 itself. I thanked the member from Oxford for a sincere and well-intentioned private member's bill that wants to address some issues that I think all members of the Legislature are concerned about. However, I did point out at the time that the government had already reformed the legislation that governs HSC in 2011 and strengthened the accountability standards that require HSC to report annually to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

As I also stated in 2015, the Housing Services Corp. had asked the ministry to help facilitate an independent

third-party review of itself and its subsidiaries. That was selected through a competitive process. I supported Bill 74 at the time because we were still eagerly awaiting the results of that review, so that we could know what further steps should be taken. However, as the June 1, 2015, report by Weiler and Company stated, the HSC has taken steps to improve its efficiency through targeted expenditure controls that have resulted in significant overall expenditure reductions.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I'd like to point out that the report also concluded that HSC has instituted revised policies enhancing the accountability of its subsidiary and related companies, to align their policies with those of HSC. HSC is also in the process of winding up subsidiary companies that no longer serve an integral business purpose.

For all of those reasons, both procedural and substantive, I will not be supporting this motion today.

But I also cannot let pass some of the observations made by members of the Legislature about the housing wait-lists in our province. Indeed, they are large and they are growing. I'm very pleased that in the previous week, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing introduced new legislation that will include, among other things, inclusionary zoning, which I believe will address this long housing list.

But the reason why we have long housing lists, the reason why much of the social housing in this province is not in as good repair as it should be, was that a previous government deliberately cut funding, starved social housing of funding and downloaded those costs onto municipalities. Municipalities and this government have been working for a number of years now to reverse those cuts and bring social housing back to where it once proudly was in this province. We're undoing the damage that was done.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to be able to rise today to speak to the motion on the Housing Services Corporation Accountability Act, as brought forward by my colleague the member for Oxford.

Time does not permit much of a response to the previous speaker, but I have to say that it is the choice of the member, using his private member's time, to bring to the legislative chamber once again the issue that has prompted him to bring this forward today. I think it simply demonstrates the fact that while the member opposite has referred to some changes that have been made, clearly the egregious spending and management that brought the member to this issue in bringing Bill 74 was predicated on the fact that not enough had been done, and I think that that serves, then, to clarify the purpose of today's debate.

The Legislature gave unanimous support at second reading over a year ago. It needs to undergo third reading without delay. While this bill waits in committee, Ontario is facing a housing affordability crisis. And yet, over the last year, the government has done nothing to move

forward this bill that would help put an end to the waste and abuse of affordable housing dollars. This is an opportunity to get better value for taxpayer money and to provide better help to those who need it most. The government has the opportunity to help move this bill into law.

1520

This bill would allow the provincial auditor to investigate some of the questionable expenses at the Housing Services Corp.—consider expenses to the Housing Services Corp. such as European travel, alcohol, expensive meals or a luxury seven-day vacation to South Africa for a board member. Just like other boondoggles, such as Ornge air ambulance, the Housing Services Corp. has lost money in various failed attempts to create for-profit subsidiaries. Millions lost in a failed solar panel venture and money invested in a highly questionable corporation in Manchester, England, simply add to the list.

Imagine the good that money could have done for those who need it most. Imagine how many more affordable housing units could have been created if the Housing Services Corp. had stuck to their core responsibility and mandate rather than followed the path of these failed ventures.

This bill would empower the auditor to investigate these expenses. It would increase transparency and accountability, while making sure that the funds provided for those in need really do go to those in need and not to luxury perks for staff or board members.

Countless housing providers have reported that they could save considerable money on their operating expenses if the government did not continue to force them to purchase natural gas and insurance through this agency.

Consider the following: Toronto Community Housing paid an additional \$6 million more than necessary if they had been able to purchase gas and insurance with the rest of the city of Toronto. The city of Waterloo was forced to pay \$30,000 over three years just to be permitted to purchase natural gas from a different supplier.

This issue doesn't just impact the larger municipalities in Ontario; it impacts smaller and mid-size ones as well. It flies in the face—the reality is that there are people across Ontario who need help in order to be able to afford each month's rent.

In fast-growing York region, there are several different types of affordable housing, including Housing York Inc., co-op housing and rental supplements. Housing York Inc. was established in January 2003 and is the seventh-largest social housing provider in Ontario. With a portfolio of 36 properties and 2,483 units, they serve approximately 4,000 tenants.

Ontario is facing an affordable housing crisis. It is not just that the price of home ownership is increasing; the price of rental units is increasing as well. This leaves society's most vulnerable behind, without access to an affordable place to call home. The money that has been wasted by this failed government initiative could be better spent building more affordable housing units so

that those on the wait-list in York region and across Ontario can have an affordable place to live.

The government is quick to do photo ops on housing, but when it comes to a bill that could save millions of dollars intended for affordable housing, they continue to drag their feet and ignore the roughly 170,000 families on the waiting list. These families need our help and support. It is a shame that they languish on a waiting list while board members jet-set across the world.

Millions have been lost, under this government's watch, to scandal, waste and mismanagement. Passing this bill would be a step forward in favour of accountability and transparency. I'm proud to be able to support my colleague from Oxford on this motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's a pleasure to join the debate on this motion. What I wanted to do in the brief time I have remaining is speak a little bit to the topic of the bill that the member is advocating for and then maybe speak to what he has proposed in his motion.

As we know, the Housing Services Corp. was mandated to provide certain vital and valued services, and the goal was to reduce cost and improve efficiencies. As somebody who has come from a business background and who has worked on this type of work for clients, I know how important this type of approach can be, where you can consolidate purchasing and enjoy economies of scale and the benefits of expertise consolidated in a single organization. That's the principle behind the Housing Services Corp., as it follows good business practice. Of course, they support housing providers in their day-to-day operations by servicing programs such as insurance, investment pooling, bulk natural gas purchases—again, trying to leverage economies of scale.

In 2011, the government reformed the legislation that governs the HSC and we strengthened accountability standards that require HSC to report annually to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and also provide audited financial statements. Basically, we increased the scrutiny, oversight and accountability around the HSC.

Since 2012, we've also instituted flexibility because providers have been allowed to obtain equivalent insurance coverage from an alternate broker. So we've provided some more flexibility outside of the HSC for insurance purposes.

These are some of the things the government has done to address some of the issues that the member is trying to address in the proposed legislation.

I certainly sympathize with the member on what he's doing as far as advocating for his private member's bill, and I applaud him for his advocacy and persistence on something I know he believes to be very, very important. On that front, I have a tremendous amount of sympathy for what he's trying to do. The flip side of it is that we have a process here at the Legislature where private members' bills are negotiated between the House leaders, and those negotiations ultimately determine how many bills move forward, which bills move forward and that

sort of thing. So one of the challenges is that this goes outside of that current process. Perhaps the member doesn't agree with that current process. That's a discussion we could have. But given that we have a process in place where the House leaders negotiate the moving forward of legislation, what I don't understand is how this one would fall outside of that. That said, like I said earlier, I do applaud the member for, first of all, being committed to efficiency and accountability in government, and I do applaud him for his commitment and advocacy toward his private member's bill.

I myself have a couple of private member's bills that are in a similar position, that are waiting for a committee to hear them. I don't know if they have the same support from the opposition, but I would certainly like to see them move forward, as well. I'll take the 10 seconds of opportunity to plug both bills, Bill 127 and Bill 193—one that has passed second reading and one that is going to be debated next week. I hope I have the opposition's support on those.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I will return back to the member for Oxford to wrap up.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank everyone who responded to my bill. It seems that we have a considerable amount of consensus within the Legislature in support of the items that are in this bill.

The concern from the government side seems to be that they believe that somehow I'm circumventing the system. I would just like to point out that suggesting that I don't understand the system—I spent five years getting one private member's bill through that system, so I know exactly how it works.

One of the other things I noticed during that time is that there is a way of moving forward. The government, from time to time, will take a private member's bill and put it in place within one of their own, which, when the Housing Services Act, that the minister had just got through putting through the House—if the minister really believed this was the right thing to do, then this could have been incorporated there.

1530

The suggestion from Etobicoke Centre was that, in fact, I was doing this and advocating on my private member's bill. I want to tell you, this has nothing to do with my private member's bill. This is not a great issue in my riding. This is a great issue for the 171,000 people who need and are waiting for affordable housing.

This isn't the only answer, but as I said in my presentation, this would provide rent supplements for 100,000 more people into housing so they would have a place to live. It would repair 126 units that are presently boarded up, so people in Toronto could move into those. The only way we can do that is to get something passed so they can opt out of this.

I have a list here. The city of Toronto has—what is it here? According to a private and confidential memo from the city manager, Joseph Pennachetti, obtained through a freedom-of-information request, Toronto Community Housing Corp. would save \$6.288 million a year if they could opt out—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: The minister can opt out and opt out right now—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. We will vote on the motion at the end of private members' public business.

SIKH MASSACRE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should recognize the state-organized violence perpetrated against the Sikhs throughout India as a genocide.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Singh has moved private member's notice of motion number 79. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: This issue, Madam Speaker, is so vitally important to the people of this province and particularly the people in my constituency. It's an issue that impacts people across the world, and the Sikh community, but not only the Sikh community—anyone who hails from South Asia.

The problem that currently exists is that, as it stands, the violence perpetrated against the Sikh community is referred to as a "riot." It's often referred as "anti-Sikh riots." The problem is that when you refer to this violence as a riot, it suggests spontaneous violence. It suggests that there were two groups that fought against each other. In fact, it casts aspersion and blame against communities who are innocent.

The facts in this case are very clear. There was a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, India's Supreme Court, a retired Justice, Justice G.T. Nanavati, who was commissioned to do a report, which is called the Nanavati report. In that report, he makes it abundantly clear that these attacks were not spontaneous. He makes it clear that they could not have happened but for the organization of elected officials. He points out that public transit, the DTC, the Delhi Transport Corp., was used to bus in people from other locations so that these attacks could occur.

In fact, other reports point out that voter lists were used. Voter lists, which are tools for democracy, were used to identify homes that were Sikh homes, and then the mobs were directed to attack and kill those people.

In addition, the police were told, before this attack occurred, to disarm and to remove from Sikh homes any sort of weapons that could be used to protect themselves.

This was all done in a systematic and planned way.

In fact, Hindu families and Muslim families put their own lives at risk to save their Sikh neighbours. They put their lives at risk to save their neighbours. If it continues to be referred to as a riot, it does an injustice to those Hindu families who stood up to protect their own Sikh neighbours. It does an injustice to the Muslim families that almost risked death to protect their Sikh neighbours. It does a grave injustice because it's false.

The truth of the matter is, the evidence all points very clearly to the fact that this was a state-organized attack. It

was systematic, it was organized, it was planned and it was to target anyone who was of Sikh descent. The kara, which I wear on my wrist and other articles of faith were used as the identifiers that this person would be killed.

The evidence, as I said, is outstanding, but it's important to frame this and to understand why it's so important. The term "riot" divides a community, because it suggests that people just spontaneously erupted and try to kill their neighbours. That is false. It could not have happened.

The evidence in the Nanavati commission points out that it could not have happened that way. This was not a spontaneous set of circumstances, and it wasn't neighbours who were killing neighbours. They were people who were bused in from outside. They were organized; they were directed to do this. In fact, the Nanavati commission points out that key elected officials from all levels of government—there's evidence, there are affidavits that point to them being responsible for organizing these attacks.

It's important that we move away from the language of riot, which divides our community, and move towards the language of genocide, which casts the blame on the true organizers of this attack.

This attack didn't only impact people in New Delhi, which was the concentration of the attack, but impacted people across India. The Sikh community was targeted across India.

Some of the stories are tremendously harrowing. One personal story: I was getting my robes fitted, as a lawyer—one of the things we wear. Much like what you're wearing, Madam Speaker, we wear robes. The tailor who was fitting my robes asked if I knew much about what happened in November 1984. I said, "Of course I know what happened." He said, "I lived through it." I said, "Really?"

I knew, by his name, that the man was a Hindu man. He said, "In fact, I can tell you a story about what happened." I'm like, "Yeah, definitely, tell me the story."

He said, "I was a tailor then as well, and my best friend was also a tailor. He was a Sikh man. His shop was burnt down, and he fled his home. I took him into my home, and I was afraid; I was deathly afraid for my life. But I knew they were targeting Sikhs, so I let him into my home. Afterwards, he asked me if I could go"—the friend who was a Sikh said, "Could you go back to my tailor shop? There's a lockbox in which I kept all my savings."

At night, when there was a curfew, this tailor said he left his home. There was a curfew. Again, he could have been killed himself. He went to the tailor shop, which was all burned down, found and retrieved the lockbox and brought back the entire life savings of his best friend.

It's just one small example, but there were so many harrowing stories.

The one story that I want to share with you that, to me, is something different from what I normally have heard is a story of a reporter. I've met witnesses; I've met survivors who talk about what they experienced. They tell me how horrific it was to see their family members

slain in front of their eyes—the fact that they saw their brothers being killed.

Many Sikh men were targeted because of the very visible identity of being a Sikh, but women were targeted if they wore a kara, which is that steel bracelet. So the articles of faith were used to identify someone and to kill them.

One of the things, though, that really impacted me a lot was a story by Rahul Bedi, who is a Delhi-based correspondent writing for the BBC. In this story, he writes about when he was a reporter with the Indian Express newspaper. He talks about being with two colleagues and visiting the area where the attacks occurred, right after the funeral of Mrs. Gandhi. He talks about walking through laneways littered with bodies. He sees body parts that were hacked off, hair that was brutally hacked off people's heads.

At one point, he went to certain tenements, certain buildings, where the bodies were piled up so high that the drainage was blocked and there was flooding going on in the streets.

He went to a certain area and noticed a mother, who was polio-afflicted, holding onto her daughter. They went to lift the daughter up to see if she needed some care. The woman just froze in terror and screamed out, because she thought this was someone else who was going to kill her child.

This reporter, who is writing after the fact, writes about seeing a young child who was hiding underneath a bed. That room where the child was hiding was littered with dead bodies. The child had wrapped a cloth around his stomach because of a wound he had suffered and was hiding there to survive. They took that child to the hospital. That child, later on, passed away.

They were at this location, and 24 hours later, police arrived, but the carnage had already left so many dead. The reporter writes, "Police arrived in Trilokpuri 24 hours later when the Indian Express revealed the horrific massacre.

"Sadly, there were no Sikhs left to protect."

There are other cities that have recognized this genocide, and I want to point out some of the cities that have done so already. These cities are in California, many of them, and I just want to list some of the cities that have recognized it: the city of Stockton in California, April 27, 2016; Kerman city in California, November 4, 2015; Bakersfield, California, December 12, 2015; and Harvey in Cook county, Illinois, November 13, 2014.

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These are cities that have already recognized November 1984 as a genocide. In fact, the California State Assembly released a resolution on April 13, 2015—the resolution chair was Richard Gordon—ACR-34, and this was amended on April 8, 2015. The subject was "November 1984 Anti-Sikh Pogroms: Remembrance." In this, the assembly of California recognizes the attacks on Sikhs as an anti-Sikh pogrom.

"Pogrom" is much closer to the truth. A pogrom indicates an organized attack against a minority community.

But what we're asking today is to recognize this as a genocide. The definition of genocide, as defined by article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948, states "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group." The acts can involve killing members of the group, causing serious bodily harm or mental harm to the group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction, or forcibly transferring the children of one group to another.

The definition makes it absolutely clear, and in fact, the current government of India, the home minister—and this is an article from the Hindu, a very well-established newspaper. This is the headline of the article in the Hindu, December 27, 2014: "1984 Riots Were Genocide, Says Rajnath." That's the Union home minister, Rajnath Singh, of the current administration in India.

The Delhi state assembly passed a resolution condemning the Sikh massacres of 1984. This was on July 1, 2015. The Delhi state assembly, much like our assembly, passed a resolution condemning the massacre of 1984 and specifically calling on the investigation of Congress leader Jagdish Tytler and other individuals who were involved in the planning and organization.

Listen, Madam Speaker, this is an issue that is so deeply important. In order to ensure that there is reconciliation and healing, the first step for reconciliation and healing is to ensure that the harm that a community suffered was recognized, and to also eradicate any misconception that this was two communities fighting against each other. There is a horrible misconception this was somehow a Hindu-Sikh conflict. It was never a Hindu-Sikh conflict, and I want to highlight that. Hindu families put their lives at risk to protect Sikhs.

This was a state-organized, systematically organized attack, and it's so important for the healing and reconciliation of those individuals who suffer from the trauma of this incident to have it recognized here in Ontario. Ontario has recognized, at the provincial assembly, other genocides, like the Holodomor in Bill 147 in 2009, as well as the Armenian genocide on March 27, 1990. So there is a precedent for this assembly to recognize genocide. This assembly has recognized it before.

This would do a great justice to the people who are suffering. It would clear up the misconception, which is very harmful. The notion of a genocide unites communities. It says that it's not the community's fault; it was those who are the organizers, the state, that was organizing this attack. It was not community members and it was not your neighbours who were responsible. This will bring people together instead of dividing people. The terminology "riot" continues to divide our community, continues to hurt the community, and it doesn't offer an opportunity for healing and reconciliation.

People fled the human rights violations in India. They fled this genocide. They fled the attacks in November 1984 to come to Canada. Canada is a beacon of human rights, a place where human rights are celebrated and

protected. Let's send a message that we denounce these acts of violations against human rights, we denounce genocide and we support human rights.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Interruption.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Before I recognize the member from Mississauga–Erindale, I just want to remind all the visitors: You are here to witness the debate. You're not allowed to participate, whether it's clapping or any other form.

The member from Mississauga–Erindale.

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: This is a great opportunity for me to speak on this important subject matter. But before I do, I want to recognize the members of the Sikh community who are in the Legislature to watch this debate.

The strength of our province is rooted in the diversity of our people. Ontario is proud to be home to a vibrant Sikh community that has contributed immensely to the life of our province. The principles of Sikhism—honesty, hard work and service to others—resonate with all Ontarians and represent vital building blocks of a strong society. The Sikh community is integral to the stability and success of our country. From working in the logging and forestry industry, to building the railway, to fighting on behalf of Canada in World War I, the Sikh community has played an important role in Ontario and in Canada.

We are debating a motion pertaining to the events of November 1984 in India. This week, we mark the 32nd anniversary of the invasion of the Golden Temple. Earlier this year, as part of Premier Wynne's trade mission to India and Punjab, I had the honour to visit the Golden Temple again. The tragic events leading up to and following the invasion of the Golden Temple and the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi resulted in the unnecessary loss of thousands of innocent lives. We have all heard—and the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton talked about—some of the heart-wrenching stories from the families of the victims, seen through print media, through TV interviews and some personal contacts. We can all share some personal stories as well.

Madam Speaker, those stories are true. Innocent people, for no fault of their own, were killed. Mothers witnessed their young sons at their prime age being killed. Wives saw their husbands, fathers, fathers-in-law and brothers dragged out of their homes and murdered in front of their own eyes. Young children saw their parents being killed in front of their own eyes. Parents saw their daughters being raped, and they watched helplessly. Their homes and shops were ransacked and set on fire.

I salute the human beings who provided shelter to, and saved the lives of, some of the people who were targeted. Several countries have recognized the grave atrocities that took place in 1984. In responding to an online petition campaign that had generated over 30,000 signatures in 2013, President Obama, even though he refused to declare the 1984 anti-Sikh violence as genocide, noted that grave human rights violations had occurred and

continued to say that, "We continue to condemn—and more importantly, to work against—violence directed at people based on their religious affiliation."

In offering his government's apology in 2005, then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said the following: "I have no hesitation in apologizing to the Sikh community. I apologize not only to the Sikh community but to the whole Indian nation, because what took place in 1984 is the negation of the concept of nationhood enshrined in our constitution."

"On behalf of our government, on behalf of the entire people of this country I bow my head in shame that such a thing took place."

Then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh went on to say the following: "We cannot rewrite the past. But as human beings, we have the willpower, and we have the ability to write a better future for all of us."

For some victims and their families, the 1984 event's wounds may have healed. For others, this tragedy still carries on as an open wound to this day.

For 32 years, families of the victims have been asking that those responsible be brought to justice. Mothers have been raising their children by doing manual labour without any relief or support. In addition, some bad elements in society have further committed crimes and taken advantage of the situation by demanding money, extorting money and exploiting young women. This is shameful. My words in this House today are really empty words, and they are no relief to those families.

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Moreover, this is not a partisan issue. It is so unfortunate that the member who brought up this motion failed to discuss it with the other four members of the Legislature who are also Sikh members. If he had done that, we could have introduced this motion together, which could have made this motion more effective and meaningful.

I want to watch this important debate. I have an open mind on this issue. My objective as a legislator is to ensure that justice is served, those who committed crimes are punished, relief is provided to mothers who have been struggling to raise their children, steps are taken so that these kinds of unfortunate acts do not happen again, and bad elements of society do not exploit situations again.

I look forward to the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I am pleased, on behalf of Patrick Brown and the PC caucus, to hear that we're going to be supporting this motion fully. I congratulate the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton. The PC caucus does support the motion. It is time that Ontario took a leap in Canada and joined California and North America to recognize the November 1984 state-sponsored violence perpetrated against Sikhs as a genocide, and to be clear about that.

As my colleagues mentioned, the genocide began after the assassination of Indira Gandhi by bodyguards. More than 8,000 deaths occurred in the ensuing chaos, and more than 20,000 individuals left the city in the aftermath

of the violence and riots; the worst, of course, in Delhi, where 3,000 Sikhs were beaten and burned to death, and in neighbouring Haryana.

Many thought it would be reasonable that by hiding in the local gurdwara—a religious institution, a place of worship—they would be safe. But they, too, were shown no mercy. They were massacred. Any Sikh the rioters could get their hands on was beaten and killed.

We should note, for the record, that there were many Hindu and Muslim citizens who helped to hide Sikhs, helped them to escape and protected them; ordinary citizens rising up against the government-sponsored genocide of Sikh individuals. One member who survived the riot shared his experience:

"The loss all around was unprecedented. The nearby gurdwara was strewn in blood (and those marks have barely rubbed off to this day). The head priest was slashed to death and his young children were beaten and harassed. The broken windowpanes of the gurudwara remain, a bitter memory to the stone pelting that went on for hours on the holy shrine. In Daltonganj, countless Sikh men were beaten up. A dozen died. Some houses were stoned; others set ablaze. Some local Sikhs who were travelling out of the town were dragged out of trains," put on the ground "and killed. The hospital refused to admit the injured, unless men cut their hair. Turban-wearing Sikhs had to make a choice:" they could either cut their hair or get no medical care and die. "Across the nation, more than 8,000 ... were killed, women were raped, burnt alive, homes brought down...."

Those who survived—my colleague mentioned his friend the tailor—had their psyches impaired permanently.

Speaker, I know that I have many colleagues who want to speak to this motion as well, but I want to say that we are pleased to support the member's initiative and hope that other provinces will join with Ontario and recognize this massacre as a genocide.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would like to thank my colleague the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton for introducing this motion, which, as we know, states: "That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should recognize the November 1984 state-organized violence perpetrated against the Sikhs throughout India as a genocide."

As always, my colleague is a tireless crusader against injustice, by which he continues to distinguish himself. I am proud to be a member of the same caucus.

Usually, we rise to speak on specific local issues, but today we have the opportunity to speak to a motion of broader reach in terms of history, the future and human rights. This is an important motion that recognizes the intent of the anti-Sikh violence that occurred in India in 1984 and denounces all intolerance and violence across the globe that ultimately stems from hatred.

It is important that we have an official position, as a province, to ensure that we remember the thousands of

victims who lost their lives during this genocide. A formal resolution renews the call to ultimately bring the perpetrators to justice.

We cannot change the horrific events of 1984, but, as members of this Legislature, we have an opportunity to represent the families of genocide victims and we have an opportunity to stand up for them.

Madam Speaker, I was six in 1984, and that was a long time ago. But time does not heal all wounds. When a community has been cut down, when families have been ended and when those who were behind the organized violence are not brought to justice, those wounds can't heal; they fester. That is a long time without justice and without healing.

Though the total number of victims is unconfirmed, more than 8,000 people lost their lives during this massacre, this genocide, and thousands of others were affected by injury, displacement and oppression. We're talking about mass murder and massive suffering, so it's important that our voices are loud and that our voices are heard. There are also a lot of voices that came together and inspired the creation of this particular motion.

In May 2000, a commission was appointed by the National Democratic Alliance government in India to investigate the violence and its causes. The one-man commission consisted of former Supreme Court of India Justice G.T. Nanavati. The commission was granted a mandate to look at the following points: What were the sparks that led to the attacks targeting members of the Sikh community? What was the sequence of events? Could these crimes have possibly been averted and were there any lapses on the part of authorities? Were administrative measures taken to stop and to deal with the violence useful? And finally, what solutions can be recommended for adoption to ultimately serve justice?

In the report, former Supreme Court of India Justice Nanavati stated that the killing of Sikhs in India in 1984 was planned and organized. Human rights organizations have also reported that democratic voter lists were used to identify and target Sikh businesses and homes and that children were found beheaded in the aftermath of those horrendous days. We've heard more specific and awful examples of the violence here today.

The words "planned" and "organized," though, are very important. They distinguish this from being a random act of violence and acknowledge that there were systemic and concerted efforts to kill thousands of Sikhs in India.

The report also states, "All this could not have happened if it was merely a spontaneous reaction of the angry public. The systematic manner in which the Sikhs were thus killed indicate that the attacks on them were organized."

It also says, "There is also evidence on record to show that on 31 October 1984 either meetings were held or the persons who could organize attacks were contacted and were given instructions to kill Sikhs and loot their houses and shops. The attacks were made in a systematic manner and without much fear of the police."

New Democrats have always supported the right of all people to live in safety and practise their faith in peace, and that is why my colleague brought this motion for debate. Today we are acknowledging the systemic murder of thousands and calling for justice in their honour and their memory. Too often, it takes us too long to acknowledge when an atrocity occurred. That prevents us from taking the necessary steps to avoid future atrocities from occurring.

By acknowledging that the violence against Sikhs in India in 1984 was, in fact, genocide allowed by those who should have kept them safe and secure in their homes, we are acknowledging that justice must be served.

In November, when we reflect on the anniversary of this genocide, it is also important to recognize, as we've heard today, the brave actions of many from other faith backgrounds and communities. They provided protection and refuge to their Sikh brothers and sisters at great personal risk to themselves. It is a reminder that our shared humanity can triumph even in the face of such a dark tragedy.

Madam Speaker, it is often at our darkest hours that people have the opportunity to shine the brightest. When we acknowledge the depths of evil and malice that can grow within humanity, we must also see and remember the spirit and virtue that can break through.

On passing this motion, we can send a message to Sikhs and other community groups around the world that here in Ontario, we stand up for human rights and denounce intolerance and violent hate crimes.

Also, Madam Speaker, we are members of a state assembly, and it is our job to make decisions to keep our constituents safe from harm. It is also our duty to call on other state legislators to remember their roles and responsibilities and, when we see that they have done harm, to speak up and say so.

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I will be supporting this motion, and I hope that my colleagues from all parties in the Legislature will join me.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I appreciate very much this opportunity to respond to this motion from the member from Brampton-Gore-Malton. I respect very much his intention in bringing the motion forward as a member of the Sikh community and the emotions attached to what happened in 1984. I know this is a powerful and very important emotional issue for him and the community that he represents.

My concern, however, and why I won't be supporting this motion today is I don't believe this is the right place or the right court for having this discussion. The term "genocide" was coined in 1944 by Raphael Lemkin as part of a UN declaration which was incorporated into the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948. It ultimately is an International Court of Justice determination.

While I appreciate that the member talks about other opportunities we've had to declare days in the House in support of communities who have been experiencing genocide, they were all previously determined to have been a genocide in the international community. It would be wrong for us to be inserting ourselves into that process at this point.

I'm particularly concerned, if you look at the history of genocides—the Assyrian genocide, 750,000 people over a four-year period; the Armenian genocide, 1.5 million people over a six-month period; the Holocaust, upward of six million Jews over a 12-year period. This, and so many more genocides—we don't want to in any way diminish how atrocious the genocides were, but at the same time we recognize how horrific what happened in 1984 was to the Sikh community. It was, absolutely. We stand strong with our Sikh friends all across this province in declaring that what happened there, as the Americans have done, is a grave human rights violation at the very least. It may well qualify as a genocide in the court of international justice, if that opportunity comes up.

I think that's a debate that, at best, the federal government has to be having. If the member for Brampton-Gore-Malton is successful in his endeavours to become a representative at the federal level, he can bring that so they can then bring that to the international community.

For those reasons, I'll be voting against this motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Todd Smith: Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to join this debate. As you probably know, and members of the Legislature know, I've spent a lot of time over the last four and a half years with members of the Sikh community, marking their religious celebrations and getting to know them better in their community, learning more about their history.

If I could, on a lighter note—and I know this is a very serious topic—I know how important the Sikh community is to the culture of Canada and how important the culture of Canada is for our Sikh community, particularly here in the GTA.

This week, there is a member of the Sikh community—and I see my friend Binder Singh up there, who was a member of the Hockey Night in Canada broadcast, the Punjabi broadcast, previously. If you haven't heard it yet, a member of the Sikh community has become a YouTube sensation this week in calling the game-winning goal for the Pittsburgh Penguins in their series: "Nick Bonino! Bonino! Bonino! Bonino! Bonino! Bonino!" It was quite a call, so if you get a chance after this very serious debate to check this out, it was quite something to see in the Stanley Cup playoffs. He has become a real sensation.

On a more serious note, though, we spoke last month about Canada's history with South Asian immigrants and their treatment in trying to migrate to Canada. For a long time, members of the Sikh community and other immigrants from South Asia were subjected to prejudicial

regulations imposed by other governments as a means of restricting their immigration. In spite of the fact that Canada and India, for decades, have been members of the Commonwealth, and previous to that were members of the British Empire, the South Asian population in Canada was in the low four digits until the late 1960s.

Recently—and I have a number of books in my office about the Sikh religion and the various ordeals and tragic circumstances that they've gone through—I've learned a lot about religious violence in India and in South Asia during different points in history. While the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton has highlighted the actions of 1984, there have been multiple instances of anti-Sikh violence, anti-Muslim violence and general religious violence throughout India's history.

Immediately after the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, for example, Indian authorities gave the army a free hand to go after Sikh demonstrators in the streets of New Delhi. The home minister of the Indian government actually threatened to throw leaders of the Sikh community into concentration camps after days of religious violence between different Sikh, Hindu and Muslim factions, both in New Delhi and across India.

Violence against Sikhs in India, unfortunately, has a long and deeply rooted history. In that sense, it's impossible to escape the force and emotion behind the motion brought forth by my friend and colleague from Bramalea-Gore-Malton here this afternoon. It comes from a long and demonstrative history that includes the events of 1984, and that kind of prolonged and violent injustice does deserve some recognition here in Ontario.

I'll be supporting the motion put forward by my colleague from the NDP later today, and I'm pleased to do so.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I just wanted, first of all, to respond to the member from Beaches-East York about what is and what is not a genocide.

Defined in Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948—this is the United Nations—it says that "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy"—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order. Yes. I just wanted to remind the member.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: —"to destroy, in whole or in part," a national group, and it goes on to define a group as of the same nationality or religion. That is a genocide. It's not about the numbers; it's about the intent. So I just wanted to correct that.

I also want to correct the sense that sometimes is out there that human rights is not a provincial matter. Human rights are everyone's responsibility, at every level of government.

I commend the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton. He has been a tireless advocate for Sikhs in every way in this House, and I commend him for that, for standing up for those he knows and loves, and standing up for

historical accuracy and for justice, because that is what this motion is about.

I was raised in a household committed to human rights and that often talked about human rights abuses. It's interesting that it's Italian Heritage Day because, coming from, in part, an Italian background, I remember stories of my father not being allowed in the front door of establishments in this very city and being allowed only in the back doors. There were racist laws about those from the Mediterranean not congregating in cafés, on the streets. There were racist laws in the city.

In my day—and I know I'm old, but in my day there were rules: no Jews, no dogs, no Irish allowed on the boardwalk—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No Frenchmen.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Yes, no francophones, although it didn't say that down at the boardwalk.

There were clubs that denied membership to people of colour. This is all within recent memory. There were race riots—race riots—in Christie Pits, all within recent memory. And let us not forget, Madam Speaker, that this country turned away Jews who were fleeing from the Holocaust.

We also have an amazing history in this chamber of supporting human rights, and we should celebrate that in a non-partisan way. The very first tri-party bill was against the Holodomor, declaring it as a genocide, where Russia—and I was happy to be a co-signatory of that—where Stalin forcibly starved to death eight million to 10 million Ukrainians. That was done in this House. Our federal government has talked about the Armenian genocide. Recognizing and naming genocide as genocide is a proud tradition in both legislative bodies.

I also want to mention something a little bit more recent in my own riding, and how this could flare up overnight. This was only 1984 that these events took place. People lived through them. They remember them. There are families who lost loved ones who are still alive in our communities here in Toronto.

Something very frightening happened in my own riding regarding racism, and that was the Roma community, under Stephen Harper. We woke one day in Parkdale–High Park to see that 200 students from one of my public schools went missing. Nobody knew where they went—200 students disappeared, because their families were threatened with deportation. They went underground; they went missing. We lost 20 teachers. Neighbours were missing. That happened just a few years ago.

So if we think that this is somebody else's problem, or if this is some other jurisdiction's issue—it is never another jurisdiction's issue. It's never someone else's problem. Racism and everything that is associated with racism is everyone's issue, and it's certainly the issue in this Legislature that we need to deal with. We recently had Black Lives Matter and I was proud to go down to their demonstration. Again, the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton has been strident and out there in terms of standing on issues of racism and standing with people of colour, not only Sikhs.

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So here we are again. Again, to those who would vote against this motion I simply say, “Shame,” because it's a chance for the victims' families, for those who remember, for those who carry on the memory—it's a chance to do what we can here to say that we, all of us, bear some responsibility. It's a way of paying back. I know a little-known point that has not been raised was that England—Maggie Thatcher—was involved in this genocide. Her mark was on it. So we, all of us, have some blame to bear and we, all of us, need to make recompense every moment that we can, and here's one of them.

So I urge all my colleagues to vote for this motion, to vote on behalf of our Sikh community and to vote on behalf of everyone in every community who has experienced the horror of racism and of every community that has survivors of genocide.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I rise to express my extreme sadness about the loss of thousands of innocent Sikh lives and their properties in India in 1984.

That grim tragedy in 1984 shall always be remembered as a black chapter in the history of India and a blot on the humanity of those who could, but did not, stop the tragedy from happening.

The killing and maiming of innocent Sikhs and the looting and burning of their properties was in the aftermath of the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, India's then Prime Minister. The history of nations bears evidence that violence is not a solution for resolving political and social conflicts. My heart goes out to those innocent Sikhs and their survivors who lost their lives and properties in that 1984 tragedy.

Madam Speaker, despite what I said and how deeply sad I feel, in my opinion, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario is not the proper forum to bring this motion and debate it; the House of Commons may be. The issues of state complicity and genocide are legal concepts that beg for an evidentiary basis. The proper forum to debate these issues is a court of law, not the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Harris: It has often been said that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. What a further tragedy it would be if we, as a society, did not take the time to recognize the brutal and horrific nature of the mass violence against the Sikh community in 1984. What a further tragedy it would be if we, as a society, did not learn lessons from these sad events, now over 30 years ago, to prevent similar sector-based carnage from repeating itself.

Of course, over 30 years after these tragic events, many questions remain as to the lack of justice for the victims and their family members. While true justice in the face of unspeakable tragedies, like those we are discussing today, may never be fully realized, we fail as a

society if we don't work to right the wrongs that we can all agree have taken place.

One step toward that justice is to recognize the 1984 events for the toll they look on the lives of Sikhs who faced the brutality of riots that claimed entire families. The death toll of Sikhs that was the result of the four days of chaos points toward the declaration that today's motion asks us to support. Again, we, as a society, must learn from the lessons of the past.

Today, we stand to indicate that those lessons are not lost on this Legislature or the people of Ontario, and we stand to support the motion brought forward by the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton. I'm proud to support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to speak on this very, very important issue.

Needless to say, we should never, ever forget the atrocities that occurred in India, in New Delhi, in Punjab, in November 1984.

This issue hits extremely close to home for me. My family was held hostage, at gunpoint. The captors were trying to kidnap my sister, and if it hadn't been for my mom pleading on her knees and showing her fresh stitches that she had because of an operation on her abdomen, I don't think my sister would have been left without any harm. There would have been, I believe, and my family believes, some serious consequences from that.

I wasn't in India at that time. I remember my father telling me stories of gasoline being poured down the mouths of innocent people and then they were lit on fire.

These are extremely serious events that happened, and we should never, ever forget them.

As the member from Mississauga-Erindale stated, had all the other Sikh members and other members been involved in bringing this motion forward, I certainly believe it could have been a lot stronger and a lot more beneficial—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise in support of the member from Bramalea-East York's motion today. It's not a bill. It's a motion. We just heard the member for Mississauga-Brampton South say that she believes that this should be debated in a court of law. Well, it's a motion. We're not looking to fine any companies or fine any individuals or prosecute anybody for the crimes that were committed. We're looking to create public awareness. We're a civilized society, and we understand that even civilized people such as ourselves, dressed in nice suits and ties today, can sometimes do horrific things because of horrible prejudice. So we are trying to set an example for Ontario. That's why we're here. It's the Legislature of Ontario. We represent our constituents, and we're trying to set an example and show that we understand that horrific events in 1984,

where thousands of Sikhs were murdered after two Sikh guards murdered the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, at the time—that this is something we will not allow to be ignored or be forgotten, and we do not want to see the mistakes of the past return.

I myself have spoken here about the Armenian genocide. I've spoken about the Rwandan genocide. I've spoken about the Holocaust. I've spoken about the Yazidis and the Christians, who are right now experiencing a genocide in the Middle East.

This is why we're here talking about this motion today—not just for all the people of Sikh nationality who are here today and want their loved ones who were murdered to be remembered; but we're also here to ensure that something is being done and to pressure governments across the world to stop the genocides that are taking place right now, where young girls are being sold, possibly while we're sitting here debating this, into slavery as sex slaves by ISIS.

We want to commend, as well, with the motion—yes, we want to remember the victims, but we want to commend what the Jewish community calls “the righteous among the nations.” We refer to those individuals who, during the Holocaust, saved Jewish lives, hid Jewish families and took in children and called them their own during the Holocaust and then tried to find the relatives even afterwards. They would bury in the ground, because they didn't want the papers to be found in their home—they would bury in a jar in the ground names of the children and their relatives so that they wouldn't be forgotten, and tried to reunite the families afterwards.

I obviously commend the member for bringing it forward. Yes, of course, any time you are killing somebody because of their religion, it is a genocide. It means you are trying to destroy that culture and wipe them from the face of the earth. We understand that it's certainly more than just riots which would be spontaneous and not state-sponsored. We want to ensure that everybody in Ontario understands that hatred will not be allowed, that it will not be tolerated; and to also understand that, yes, we want everybody in Ontario to hold onto their culture, their religion and their past, and to remember it and to be proud of their heritage; and to understand that by knowing your heritage and celebrating your heritage you're raising yourself up, that you're a better person and your society is better for that; and to invite us to celebrate with you so that we can learn about your culture as well.

We will not allow people to somehow feel better about themselves by putting somebody else down. That's not what we're here for, that's not what we stand for, and we are not going to allow that to happen in our Ontario.

Thank you again for bringing the motion forward, and we on this side of the House are happy to support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We'll return to the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton to wrap up this final debate.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I want to personally name the members who spoke in favour of the motion; I think it's very important. I want to acknowledge the member from

Niagara West—Glanbrook, the member from Oshawa and my colleague the member from Parkdale—High Park. I want to also acknowledge, again, the member from Kitchener—Conestoga and the member from Thornhill. Thank you very much. It touches me to my heart and the people here today.

This issue is something that's so powerfully important, and some of the members touched on why it's so important. When you acknowledge an injustice against one community, it's to prevent injustice against other communities. I really hold strongly to the belief that injustice against one is truly injustice against all.

I celebrated the Armenian community when they were able to achieve that recognition of genocide, and I celebrated the hard work of the Ukrainian community when they were able to acknowledge their genocide. Last month was Tamil Genocide Remembrance Month, and it's a powerful reminder of how important it is to acknowledge genocides that occur.

There are ongoing injustices that happen around the world, so any time we make a clear statement recognizing this type of violence as a genocide, we're making a strong statement to reject these types of acts around the world and we're calling for a renewed commitment to fighting for human rights and defending against injustice. This would be such a powerful statement. It would impact so many people, and it would right such a grave misconception and injustice that these attacks were riots or that these attacks were spontaneous. It is so powerfully important to define what happened as a genocide, not just to give honour to the Sikh survivors but to honour any community in the world that's seeking equity, any community in the world that's facing injustice, to honour any community that's facing a genocide.

Injustice against one is injustice against all. Let's stand together against this type of crime.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AMENDMENT ACT (DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS), 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DU POISSON ET DE LA FAUNE (CORMORANS À AIGRETTES)

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will deal first with ballot number 45, standing in the name of Mr. Bailey. Mr. Bailey has moved second reading of Bill 205, An Act to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): What committee would that be referred to?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Legislative Assembly, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Legislative Assembly. Is it agreed? Agreed.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 74

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Hardeman has moved private member's notice of motion number 77. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will deal with the vote at the end of the other business.

SIKH MASSACRE

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Singh has moved private member's notice of motion number 79. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

I believe we will have a vote. It will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1624 to 1629.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 74

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Will members please take their seats.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order.

Mr. Hardeman has moved private member's notice of motion number 77. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
DiNovo, Cheri
French, Jennifer K.

Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hudak, Tim
MacLaren, Jack
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McDonell, Jim

Munro, Julia
Natyshak, Taras
Pettapiece, Randy
Singh, Jagmeet
Smith, Todd
Tabuns, Peter

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Damerla, Dipika
Delaney, Bob
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han

Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Kiwala, Sophie
Kwinter, Monte
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

McMeekin, Ted
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Thibeault, Glenn
Vernile, Daiene

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 22; the nays are 40.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We're going to open the door for 30 seconds.

Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Mitzie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Kiwala, Sophie	Potts, Arthur
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chiarelli, Bob	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Dameria, Dipika	Martins, Cristina	Thibeault, Glenn
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dickson, Joe	McGarry, Kathryn	
Dong, Han	McMahon, Eleanor	

SIKH MASSACRE

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Singh has moved private member's notice of motion number 75. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes		
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Natyshak, Taras
Barrett, Toby	Hatfield, Percy	Pettapiece, Randy
Bisson, Gilles	Hudak, Tim	Singh, Jagmeet
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Coe, Lorne	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Martow, Gila	
French, Jennifer K.	McDonell, Jim	

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays		
Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Murray, Glen R.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 22; the nays are 40.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I beg leave to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Ballard assumes ballot item number 53 and Ms. Naidoo-Harris assumes ballot item number 60.

Orders of the day.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All right. Is it the pleasure of the House that the House adjourn? Carried.

The House will be adjourned until Monday, June 6, at 10:30.

The House adjourned at 1636.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cookville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Emie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
		Attorney General / Procureur générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Scarborough–Rouge River	

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COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Arthur Potts
Todd Smith, Monique Taylor
Glenn Thibeault
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yvan Baker
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Toby Barrett, Han Dong
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Ann Hoggarth, Peter Z. Milczyn
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Lisa Gretzky, Ann Hoggarth
Harinder Malhi, Jim McDonell
Eleanor McMahon, Lou Rinaldi
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przedziecki

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permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
Robert Bailey, Wayne Gates
Monte Kwinter, Marie-France Lalonde
Amrit Mangat, Cristina Martins
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przedziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Laurie Scott
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Steve Clark
Granville Anderson, Robert Bailey
Steve Clark, Vic Dhillon
Sophie Kiwala, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Chris Ballard, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Peter Z. Milczyn, Julia Munro
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Joe Dickson, Jennifer K. French
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Bill Walker
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Marie-France Lalonde, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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